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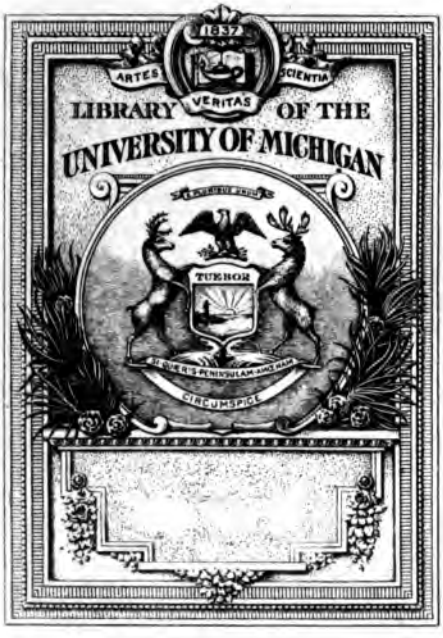
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THE LIFE AND WORKS
OF
WILLIAM COWPER.
BY
ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ. LL.D.
VOL. XIV.

LONDON

UNIV. OF MICH.

THE

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

COMPRISING

HIS POEMS,

CORRESPONDENCE, AND TRANSLATIONS.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE EDITOR,

ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq. LL.D.

POET LAUREATE, ETC.

VOL. XIV.

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THE

ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

TRANSLATED INTO

ENGLISH BLANK VERSE.

BY WILLIAM COWPER,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.

VOL. II.

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VOL. XIV.

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THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIII.

ARGUMENT OF THE THIRTEENTH BOOK.

Ulysses having finished his narrative, and received additional presents from the Phæacians, embarks; he is conveyed in his sleep to Ithaca, and in his sleep is landed on that island. The ship that carried him is in her return transformed by Neptune to a rock.

Minerva meets him on the shore, enables him to recollect his country, which, till enlightened by her, he believed to be a country strange to him, and they concert together the means of destroying the suitors. The Goddess then repairs to Sparta to call thence Telemachus, and Ulysses, by her aid disguised like a beggar, proceeds toward the cottage of Eumæus.

Grad. 2
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THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIII.

He ceased; the whole assembly silent sat,
Charm'd into ecstasy with his discourse
Throughout the twilight hall. Then, thus the King.
Ulysses, since beneath my brazen dome
Sublime thou hast arrived, like woes, I trust,
Thou shalt not in thy voyage hence sustain
By tempests tost, though much to woe inured.
To you, who daily in my palace quaff
Your princely meed of generous wine and hear
The sacred bard, my pleasure thus I speak.
The robes, wrought gold, and all the other gifts
To this our guest, by the Phæacian Chiefs
Brought hither in the sumptuous coffer lie.
But come—present ye to the stranger, each,
An ample tripod also, with a vase
Of smaller size, for which we will be paid
By public impost; for the charge of all
Excessive were by one alone defray'd.

So spake Alcinoüs, and his counsel pleased;
Then, all retiring, sought repose at home.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, each hasted to the bark
With his illustrious present, which the might
Of King Alcinoüs, who himself her sides
Ascended, safe beneath the seats bestowed,
Lest it should harm or hinder, while he toil'd
In rowing, some Phæacian of the crew.
The palace of Alcinoüs seeking next,
Together, they prepared a new regale.
For them, in sacrifice, the [1]sacred might
Of King Alcinoüs slew an ox to Jove
Saturnian, cloud-girt governor of all.
The thighs with fire prepared, all glad partook
The noble feast; meantime, the bard divine
Sang, sweet Demodocus, the people's joy.
But oft Ulysses to the radiant sun
Turn'd wistful eyes, anxious for his decline,
Nor longer, now, patient of dull delay.
As when some hungry swain whose sable beeves
Have through the fallow dragg'd his ponderous plough
All day, the setting sun views with delight
For supper' sake, which with tired feet he seeks,
So welcome to Ulysses' eyes appear'd
The sun-set of that eve; directing, then,
His speech to maritime Phæacia's sons,
But to Alcinoüs chiefly, thus he said.

[1] Ἱερον μενος Αλκινοοιο.

Alcinoüs, o'er Phæacia's realm supreme!
Libation made, dismiss ye me in peace,
And farewell all! for what I wish'd, I have,
Conductors hence, and honourable gifts
With which heaven prosper me! and may the Gods
Vouchsafe to me, at my return, to find
All safe, my spotless consort and my friends!
May ye, whom here I leave, gladden your wives
And see your children blest, and may the Powers
Immortal with all good enrich you all,
And from calamity preserve the land!
He ended; they unanimous, his speech
Applauded loud, and bade dismiss the guest
Who had so wisely spoken and so well.
Then thus Alcinoüs to his herald spake.
Pontonoüs! charging high the beaker, bear
To every guest beneath our roof the wine,
That, prayer preferr'd to the eternal Sire,
We may dismiss our inmate to his home.
Then bore Pontonoüs to every guest
The brimming cup; they, where they sat, perform'd
Libation due; but the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, from his seat arising, placed
A massy goblet in Areta's hand,
To whom in accents wing'd, grateful, he said.
Farewell, O Queen, a long farewell, till age
Arrive, and death, the appointed lot of all!
I go; but be this people, and the King
Alcinoüs, and thy progeny, thy joy
Yet many a year beneath this glorious roof!

So saying, the Hero through the palace-gate
Issued, whom, by Alcinoüs' command,
The royal herald to his vessel led.
Three maidens also of Areta's train
His steps attended; one, the robe well-bleach'd
And tunic bore; the corded coffer, one;
And food the third, with wine of crimson hue.
Arriving where the galley rode, each gave
Her charge to some brave mariner on board,
And all was safely stow'd. Meantime were spread
Linen and arras on the deck astern,
For his secure repose. And now the Chief
Himself embarking, silent lay'd him down.
Then every rower to his bench repair'd;
They drew the loosen'd cable from its hold
In the drill'd rock, and resupine, at once
With lusty strokes upturn'd the flashing waves.
His eye-lids soon sleep, falling as a dew,
Closed fast, death's simular, in sight the same.
She, as four harness'd stallions o'er the plain
Shooting together at the scourge's stroke,
Toss high their manes, and rapid scour along,
So mounted she the waves, while dark the flood
Roll'd after her of the resounding Deep.
Steady she ran and safe, passing in speed
The falcon, swiftest of the fowls of heaven;
With such rapidity she cut the waves,
An Hero bearing like the Gods above
In wisdom, one familiar long with woe
In fight sustain'd, and on the perilous flood,

Though sleeping now serenely, and resign'd
To sweet oblivion of all sorrow past.
The brightest star of heaven, precursor chief
Of day-spring, now arose, when at the isle
(Her voyage soon perform'd) the bark arrived.
There is a port sacred in Ithaca
To Phorcys, hoary antient of the Deep,
Form'd by converging shores, prominent both
And both abrupt, which from the spacious bay
Exclude all boisterous winds; within it, ships
(The port once gain'd) uncabled ride secure.
An olive, at the haven's head, expands
Her branches wide, near to a pleasant cave
Umbrageous, to the nymphs devoted named
The Naiads. In that cave beakers of stone
And jars are seen; bees lodge their honey there;
And there, on slender spindles of the rock
The nymphs of rivers weave their wondrous robes.
Perennial springs water it, and it shows
A twofold entrance; ingress one affords
To mortal man, which Northward looks direct,
But holier is the Southern far; by that
No mortal enters, but the Gods alone.
Familiar with that port before, they push'd
The vessel in; she, rapid, plow'd the sands
With half her keel, such rowers urged her on.
Descending from the well-bench'd bark ashore,
They lifted forth Ulysses first, with all
His splendid couch complete, then lay'd him down
Still wrapt in balmy slumber on the sands.

His treasures next, by the Phæacian Chiefs
At his departure given him as the meed
Due to his wisdom, at the olive's foot
They heap'd, without the road, lest while he slept
Some passing traveller should rifle them.
Then homeward thence they sped. Nor Ocean's God
His threats forgot denounced against divine
Ulysses, but with Jove thus first advised.
  Eternal Sire! I shall no longer share
Respect and reverence among the Gods,
Since now Phæacia's mortal race have ceased
To honour me, though from myself derived.
It was my purpose, that by many an ill
Harrass'd, Ulysses should have reach'd his home,
Although to intercept him, whose return
Thyself had promised, ne'er was my intent.
But him fast-sleeping swiftly o'er the waves
They have conducted, and have set him down
In Ithaca, with countless gifts enrich'd,
With brass, and tissued raiment, and with gold;
Much treasure! more than he had home convey'd
Even had he arrived with all his share
Allotted to him of the spoils of Troy.
  To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
What hast thou spoken, Shaker of the shores,
Wide-ruling Neptune? Fear not; thee the Gods
Will ne'er despise; dangerous were the deed
To cast dishonour on a God by birth
More ancient, and more potent far than they.
But if, profanely rash, a mortal man

Should dare to slight thee, to avenge the wrong
Some future day is ever in thy power.
Accomplish all thy pleasure, thou art free.
Him answer'd then the Shaker of the shores.
Jove cloud-enthroned! that pleasure I would soon
Perform as thou hast said, but that I watch
Thy mind continual, fearful to offend.
My purpose is, now to destroy amid
The dreary Deep yon fair Phæacian bark,
Return'd from safe conveyance of her freight;
So shall they waft such wanderers home no more,
And she shall hide their city, to a rock
Transform'd of mountainous o'ershadowing size.
Him then Jove answer'd, gatherer of the clouds.
Perform it, O my brother, and the deed
Thus done, shall best be done;—What time the people
Shall from the city her approach descry,
Fix her to stone transform'd, but still in shape
A gallant bark, near to the coast, that all
May wonder, seeing her transform'd to stone
Of size to hide their city from the view.
These words once heard, the Shaker of the shores
Instant to Scheria, maritime abode
Of the Phæacians, went. Arrived, he watch'd.
And now the flying bark full near approach'd,
When Neptune, meeting her, with outspread palm
Depress'd her at a stroke, and she became
Deep-rooted stone. Then Neptune went his way.
Phæacia's ship-ennobled sons meantime
Conferring stood, and thus in accents wing'd,
The amazed spectator to his fellow spake.

Ah! who hath sudden check'd the vessel's course
Homeward? This moment she was all in view.
Thus they, unconscious of the cause, to whom
Alcinoüs, instructing them, replied.
Ye Gods! a prophecy now strikes my mind
With force, my father's. He was wont to say—
Neptune resents it, that we safe conduct
Natives of every region to their home.
He also spake, prophetic, of a day
When a Phæacian gallant bark, return'd
After conveyance of a stranger hence,
Should perish in the dreary Deep, and changed
To a huge mountain, cover all the town.
So spake my father, all whose words we see
This day fulfill'd. Thus, therefore, act we all
Unanimous; henceforth no longer bear
The stranger home, when such shall here arrive;
And we will sacrifice, without delay,
Twelve chosen bulls to Neptune, if, perchance,
He will commiserate us, and forbear
To hide our town behind a mountain's height.
He spake, they, terrified, the bulls prepared.
Thus all Phæacia's Senators and Chiefs
His altar compassing, in prayer adored
The Ocean's God. Meantime Ulysses woke,
Unconscious where; stretch'd on his native soil
He lay, and knew it not, long time exiled.
For Pallas, progeny of Jove, a cloud
Drew dense around him, that ere yet agnized
By others, he might wisdom learn from her,
Neither to citizens, nor yet to friends

Reveal'd, nor even to his own espoused,
Till, first, he should avenge complete his wrongs
Domestic from those suitors proud sustain'd.
All objects, therefore, in the Hero's eyes
Seem'd alien, foot-paths long, commodious ports,
Heaven-climbing rocks, and trees of amplest growth.
Arising, fixt he stood, his native soil
Contemplating, till with expanded palms
Both thighs he smote, and plaintive thus began.
Ah me! what mortal race inhabits here?
Rude are they, contumacious and unjust,
Or hospitable, and who fear the Gods?
Where now shall I secrete these numerous stores?
Where wander I, myself? I would that still
Phæacians own'd them, and I had arrived
In the dominions of some other King
Magnanimous, who would have entertain'd
And sent me to my native home secure!
Now, neither know I where to place my wealth,
Nor can I leave it here, lest it become
Another's prey. Alas! Phæacia's Chiefs
Not altogether wise I deem or just,
Who have misplaced me in another land,
Promised to bear me to the pleasant shores
Of Ithaca, but have not so perform'd.
Jove, guardian of the suppliant's rights, who all
Transgressors marks, and punishes all wrong,
Avenge me on the treacherous race!—but hold—
I will revise my stores, so shall I know
If they have left me here of aught despoil'd.

So saying, he number'd carefully the gold,
The vases, tripods bright, and tissued robes,
But nothing miss'd of all. Then he bewail'd
His native isle, with pensive steps and slow
Pacing the border of the billowy flood,
Forlorn; but while he wept, Pallas approach'd,
In form a shepherd stripling, girlish fair
In feature, such as are the sons of Kings;
A sumptuous mantle o'er his shoulders hung
Twice-folded, sandals his nice feet upbore,
And a smooth javelin glitter'd in his hand.
Ulysses, joyful at the sight, his steps
Turn'd brisk toward her, whom he thus address'd.
Sweet youth! since thee, of all mankind, I first
Encounter in this land unknown, all hail!
Come not with purposes of harm to me!
These save, and save me also. I prefer
To thee, as to some God, my prayer, and clasp
Thy knees a suppliant. Say, and tell me true,
What land? what people? who inhabit here?
Is this some isle delightful, or a shore
Of fruitful main-land sloping to the sea?
Then Pallas thus, Goddess cœrulean-eyed.
Stranger! thou sure art simple, or hast dwelt
Far distant hence, if of this land thou ask.
It is not, trust me, of so little note,
But known to many, both to those who dwell
Toward the sun-rise, and to others placed
Behind it, distant in the dusky West.
Rugged it is, not yielding level course

To the swift steed, and yet no barren spot,
However small, but rich in wheat and wine;
Nor wants it rain or fertilizing dew,
But pasture green to goats and beeves affords,
Trees of all kinds, and fountains never dry.
Ithaca therefore, stranger, is a name
Known even at Troy, a city, by report,
At no small distance from Achaia's shore.
The Goddess ceased; then, toil-enduring Chief
Ulysses, happy in his native land,
(So taught by Pallas, progeny of Jove)
In accents wing'd her answering, utter'd prompt
Not truth, but figments to truth opposite,
For guile in him stood never at a pause.
O'er yonder flood, even in spacious[2] Crete
I heard of Ithaca, where now, it seems,
I have myself with these my stores arrived;
Not richer stores than, flying thence, I left
To my own children; for from Crete I fled
For slaughter of Orsilochus the swift,
Son of Idomeneus, whom none in speed
Could equal throughout all that spacious isle.
His purpose was to plunder me of all
My Trojan spoils, which to obtain much woe
I had in battle and by storms endured,
For that I would not gratify his Sire,
Fighting beside him in the fields of Troy,

[2] Homer dates all the fictions of Ulysses from Crete, as if he meant to pass a similiar censure on the Cretans to that quoted by St. Paul—Κρητες αει ψευσται.

But led a different band. Him from the field
Returning homeward, with my brazen spear
I smote, in ambush waiting his return
At the road-side, with a confederate friend.
Unwonted darkness over all the heavens
That night prevailed, nor any eye of man
Observed us, but unseen I slew the youth.
No sooner then with my sharp spear of life
I had bereft him, than I sought a ship
Mann'd by renown'd Phæacians, whom with gifts
Part of my spoils, and by requests, I won.
I bade them land me on the Pylian shore,
Or in fair Elis by the Epeans ruled;
But they, reluctant, were by violent winds
Driven devious thence, for fraud they purposed none.
Thus through constraint we here arrived by night,
And with much difficulty push'd the ship
Into safe harbour, nor was mention made
Of food by any, though all needed food,
But disembark'd in haste, on shore we lay.
I, weary, slept profound, and they my goods
Forth heaving from the bark, beside me placed
The treasures on the sea-beach where I slept,
Then reimbarking, to the populous coast
Steer'd of Sidonia, and me left forlorn.

He ceased; then smiled Minerva azure-eyed
And stroak'd his cheek, in form a woman now,
Beauteous, majestic, in all elegant arts
Accomplish'd, and with accents wing'd replied.

Who passes thee in artifice well-framed

And in imposture various, need shall find
Of all his policy, although a God.
Canst thou not cease, inventive as thou art
And subtle, from the wiles which thou hast loved
Since thou wast infant, and from tricks of speech
Delusive, even in thy native land?
But come, dismiss we these ingenious shifts
From our discourse, in which we both excel;
For thou of all men in expedients most
Abound'st and eloquence, and I, throughout
All heaven have praise for wisdom and for art.
And know'st thou not thine Athenæan aid,
Pallas, Jove's daughter, who in all thy toils
Assist thee and defend? I gave thee power
To engage the hearts of all Phæacia's sons,
And here arrive even now, counsels to frame
Discrete with thee, and to conceal the stores
Given to thee by the rich Phæacian Chiefs
On my suggestion, at thy going thence.
I will inform thee also what distress
And hardship under thy own palace-roof
Thou must endure; which since constraint enjoins,
Bear patiently, and neither man apprize
Nor woman that thou hast arrived forlorn
And vagabond, but silent undergo
What wrongs soever from the hands of men.
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
O Goddess! thou art able to elude,
Wherever met, the keenest eye of man,
For thou all shapes assumest; yet this I know

Certainly, that I ever found thee kind,
Long as Achaia's Heroes fought at Troy;
But when (the lofty towers of Priam laid
In dust,) we re-embark'd, and by the will
Of heaven Achaia's fleet was scatter'd wide,
Thenceforth, O daughter wise of Jove, I thee
Saw not, nor thy appearance in my ship
Once mark'd, to rid me of my numerous woes,
But always bearing in my breast a heart
With anguish riven, I roam'd, till by the Gods
Relieved at length, and till with gracious words
Thyself didst in Phæacia's opulent land
Confirm my courage, and becamest my guide.
But I adjure thee in thy father's name—
O tell me truly, (for I cannot hope
That I have reach'd fair Ithaca; I tread
Some other soil, and thou affirm'st it mine
To mock me merely, and deceive,) oh say—
Am I in Ithaca? in truth, at home?
  Thus then Minerva the cœrulean-eyed.
Such caution ever in thy breast prevails
Distrustful; but I know thee eloquent,
With wisdom and with ready thought endued,
And cannot leave thee therefore thus distress'd.
For what man, save Ulysses, new-return'd
After long wanderings, would not pant to see
At once his home, his children, and his wife?
But thou preferr'st neither to know nor ask
Concerning them, till some experience first
Thou make of her whose wasted youth is spent

In barren solitude, and who in tears
Ceaseless her nights and woeful days consumes.
I ne'er was ignorant, but well foreknew
That not till after loss of all thy friends
Thou should'st return; but loth I was to oppose
Neptune, my father's brother, sore incensed
For his son's sake deprived of sight by thee.
But, I will give thee proof—come now—survey
These marks of Ithaca, and be convinced.
This is the port of Phorcys, sea-born sage;
That, the huge olive at the haven's head;
Fast by it, thou behold'st the pleasant cove
Umbrageous, to the nymphs devoted named
The Naiads; this the broad-arch'd cavern is
Where thou wast wont to offer to the nymphs
Many a whole hecatomb; and yonder stands
The mountain Neritus with forests cloathed.
So saying, the Goddess scatter'd from before
His eyes all darkness, and he knew the land.
Then felt Ulysses, Hero toil-inured,
Transport unutterable, seeing plain
Once more his native isle. He kiss'd the glebe,
And with uplifted hands the nymphs adored.
Nymphs, Naiads, Jove's own daughters! I despair'd
To see you more, whom yet with happy vows
I now can hail again. Gifts, as of old,
We will hereafter at your shrines present,
If Jove-born Pallas, huntress of the spoils,
Grant life to me, and manhood to my son.
Then Pallas, blue-eyed progeny of Jove.

Take courage; trouble not thy mind with thoughts
Now needless. Haste—delay not—far within
This hallow'd cave's recess place we at once
Thy precious stores, that they may thine remain,
Then muse together on thy wisest course.
So saying, the Goddess enter'd deep the cave
Caliginous, and its secret nooks explored
From side to side; meantime Ulysses brought
All his stores into it, the gold, the brass,
And robes magnificent, his gifts received
From the Phæacians; safe he lodged them all,
And Pallas, daughter of Jove ægis-arm'd,
Closed fast, herself, the cavern with a stone.
Then, on the consecrated olive's root
Both seated, they in consultation plann'd
The deaths of those injurious suitors proud,
And Pallas, blue-eyed Goddess, thus began.
Laertes' noble son, Ulysses! think
By what means likeliest thou shalt assail
Those shameless suitors, who have now controul'd
Three years thy family, thy matchless wife
With language amorous and with spousal gifts
Urging importunate; but she, with tears
Watching thy wish'd return, hope gives to all
By messages of promise sent to each,
Framing far other purposes the while.
Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Ah, Agamemnon's miserable fate
Had surely met me in my own abode,
But for thy gracious warning, power divine!

Come then—Devise the means; teach me, thyself,
The way to vengeance, and my soul inspire
With daring fortitude, as when we loosed
Her radiant frontlet from the brows of Troy.
Would'st thou with equal zeal, O Pallas! aid
Thy servant here, I would encounter thrice
An hundred enemies, let me but perceive
Thy dread divinity my prompt ally.
Him answer'd then Pallas cœrulean-eyed.
And such I will be; not unmark'd by me,
(Let once our time of enterprize arrive)
Shalt thou assail them. Many, as I judge,
Of those proud suitors who devour thy wealth
Shall leave their brains then on thy palace-floor.
But come. Behold! I will disguise thee so
That none shall know thee; I will parch the skin
On thy fair body; I will cause thee shed
Thy wavy locks; I will enfold thee round
In such a kirtle as the eyes of all
Shall loath to look on; and I will deform
With blurring rheums thy eyes, so vivid erst;
So shall the suitors deem thee, and thy wife,
And thy own son whom thou didst leave at home,
Some sordid wretch obscure. But seek thou first
Thy swine-herd's mansion; he, alike, intends
Thy good, and loves affectionate thy son
And thy Penelope; thou shalt find the swain
Tending his herd; they feed beneath the rock
Corax, at side of Arethusa's fount,
On acorns dieted, nutritious food

To them, and drinking of the limpid stream.
There waiting, question him of thy concerns,
While I from Sparta praised for women fair
Call home thy son Telemachus, a guest
With Menelaus now, whom to consult
In spacious Lacedæmon he is gone,
Anxious to learn if yet his father lives.
  To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
And why, alas! all-knowing as thou art,
Him left'st thou ignorant? was it that he,
He also, wand'ring wide the barren Deep,
Might suffer woe, while these devour his wealth?
  Him answer'd then Pallas cœrulean-eyed.
Grieve thou not much for him. I sent him forth
Myself, that there arrived, he might acquire
Honour and fame. No sufferings finds he there,
But in Atrides' palace safe resides,
Enjoying all abundance. Him, in truth,
The suitors watch close ambush'd on the Deep,
Intent to slay him ere he reach his home,
But shall not as I judge, till of themselves
The earth hide some who make thee, now, a prey.
  So saying, the Goddess touch'd him with a wand.
At once o'er all his agile limbs she parch'd
The polish'd skin; she wither'd to the root
His wavy locks, and cloathed him with the hide
Deform'd of wrinkled age; she charged with rheums
His eyes before so vivid, and a cloak
And kirtle gave him, tatter'd both, and foul,
And smutch'd with smoke; then casting over all

An huge old deer-skin bald, with a long staff
She furnish'd him, and with a wallet patch'd
On all sides, dangling by a twisted thong.
Thus all their plan adjusted, different ways
They took, and she, seeking Ulysses' son,
To Lacedæmon's spacious realm repair'd.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIV.

ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTEENTH BOOK.

Ulysses arriving at the house of Eumæus, is hospitably entertained, and spends the night there.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIV.

LEAVING the haven-side, he turn'd his steps
Into a rugged path, which over hills
Mantled with trees led him to the abode
By Pallas mention'd of his noble[1] friend
The swine-herd, who of all Ulysses' train
Watch'd with most diligence his rural stores.
Him sitting in the vestibule he found
Of his own airy lodge commodious, built
Amidst a level lawn. That structure neat
Eumæus, in the absence of his Lord,
Had raised, himself, with stones from quarries hewn,
Unaided by Laertes or the Queen.
With tangled thorns he fenced it safe around,
And with contiguous stakes riven from the trunks
Of solid oak black-grain'd hemm'd it without.

[1] Δῖος ὑφορβος.—The swine-herd's was therefore in those days, and in that country, an occupation honourable as well as useful. Barnes deems the epithet δῖος significant of his noble birth. Vide Clarke in loco.

Twelve penns he made within, all side by side,
Lairs for his swine, and fast-immured in each
Lay fifty pregnant females on the floor.
The males all slept without, less numerous far,
Thinn'd by the princely wooers at their feasts
Continual, for to them he ever sent
The fattest of his saginated charge.
Three hundred, still, and sixty brawns remained.
Four mastiffs in adjoining kennels lay,
Resembling wild-beasts, nourish'd at the board
Of the illustrious steward of the styes.
Himself sat fitting sandals to his feet,
Carved from a stain'd ox-hide. Four hinds he kept,
Now busied here and there; three in the penns
Were occupied meantime, the fourth had sought
The city, whither, for the suitors use,
With no good will, but by constraint, he drove
A boar, that sacrificing to the Gods,
The imperious guests might on his flesh regale.
Soon as those clamorous watch-dogs the approach
Saw of Ulysses, baying loud, they ran
Toward him he, as ever, well-advised,
Squatted, and let his staff fall from his hand.
Yet foul indignity he had endured
Even there, at his own farm, but that the swain,
Following his dogs in haste, sprang through the porch
To his assistance, letting fall the hide.
With chiding voice and vollied stones he soon
Drove them apart, and thus his Lord bespake.
Old man! one moment more, and these my dogs

Had, past doubt, worried thee, who should'st have proved,
So slain, a source of obloquy to me.
But other pangs the Gods, and other woes
To me have given, who here lamenting sit
My godlike master, and his fatted swine
Nourish for others' use, while he, perchance,
A wanderer in some foreign city seeks
Fit sustenance, and none obtains, if still
Indeed he live, and view the light of day.
But, old friend! follow me into the house,
That thou, at least, with plenteous food refresh'd,
And cheer'd with wine sufficient, may'st disclose
Both who thou art, and all that thou hast borne.
So saying, the generous swine-herd introduced
Ulysses, and thick bundles spread of twigs
Beneath him, cover'd with the shaggy skin
Of a wild goat, of which he made his couch
Easy and large; the Hero, so received,
Rejoiced, and thus his gratitude express'd.
Jove grant thee and the Gods above, my host,
For such beneficence thy chief desire!
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
My guest! I should offend, treating with scorn
The stranger, though a poorer should arrive
Than even thyself; for all the poor that are,
And all the strangers are the care of Jove.
Little, and with good will, is all that lies
Within my scope; no man can much expect
From servants living in continual fear
Under young masters; for the Gods, no doubt,

Have intercepted my own Lord's return,
From whom great kindness I had, else, received,
With such a recompense as servants gain
From generous masters, house and competence,
And lovely wife from many a wooer won,
Whose industry should have requited well
His goodness, with such blessing from the Gods
As now attends me in my present charge.
Much had I, therefore, prosper'd, had my Lord
Grown old at home; but he hath died.—I would
That the whole house of Helen, one and all,
Might perish too, for she hath many slain
Who, like my master, went glory to win
For Agamemnon in the fields of Troy.
So saying, he girdled, quick, his tunic close,
And issuing, sought the styes; thence bringing two
Of the imprison'd herd, he slaughter'd both,
Singed them, and slash'd and spitted them, and placed
The whole well-roasted banquet, spits and all,
Reeking before Ulysses; last with flour
He sprinkled them, and filling with rich wine
His ivy-goblet, to his master sat
Opposite, whom inviting thus he said.
Now, eat, my guest! such as a servant may
I set before thee, neither large of growth
Nor fat; the fatted—those the suitors eat,
Fearless of heaven, and pitiless of man.
Yet deeds unjust as theirs the blessed Gods
Love not; they honour equity and right.
Even an hostile band when they invade

A foreign shore, which by consent of Jove
They plunder, and with laden ships depart,
Even they with terrors quake of wrath divine.
But these are wiser; these must sure have learn'd
From some true oracle my master's death,
Who neither deign with decency to woo,
Nor yet to seek their homes, but boldly waste
His substance, shameless now, and sparing nought.
Jove ne'er hath given us yet the night or day
When with a single victim, or with two
They would content them, and his empty jars
Witness how fast the squanderers use his wine.
Time was when he was rich indeed; such wealth
No Hero own'd on yonder continent,
Nor yet in Ithaca; no twenty Chiefs
Could match with all their treasures his alone;
I tell thee their amount. Twelve herds of his
The mainland[2] graze; as many flocks of sheep;
As many droves of swine; and hirelings there
And servants of his own feed for his use,
As many numerous flocks of goats; his goats,
(Not fewer than eleven numerous flocks)
Here also graze the margin of his fields
Under the eye of servants well-approved,
And every servant, every day, brings home
The goat, of all his flock largest and best.

[2] It may be proper to suggest that Ulysses was lord of part of the continent opposite to Ithaca—viz.—of the peninsula Nericus or Leuca, which afterward became an island, and is now called Santa Maura. F.

But as for me, I have these swine in charge,
Of which, selected with exactest care
From all the herd, I send the prime to them.
He ceased; meantime Ulysses ate and drank
Voracious, meditating, mute, the death
Of those proud suitors. His repast, at length,
Concluded, and his appetite sufficed,
Eumæus gave him, charged with wine, the cup
From which he drank himself; he, glad, received
The boon, and in wing'd accents thus began.
My friend, and who was he, wealthy and brave
As thou describest the Chief, who purchased thee?
Thou say'st he perish'd for the glory-sake
Of Agamemnon. Name him; I, perchance,
May have beheld the Hero. None can say
But Jove and the inhabitants of heaven
That I ne'er saw him, and may not impart
News of him; I have roam'd through many a clime.
To whom the noble swineherd thus replied.
Alas, old man! no traveller's tale of him
Will gain his consort's credence, or his son's;
For wanderers, wanting entertainment, forge
Falsehoods for bread, and wilfully deceive.
No wanderer lands in Ithaca, but he seeks
With feign'd intelligence my mistress' ear;
She welcomes all, and while she questions each
Minutely, from her lids lets fall the tear
Affectionate, as well beseems a wife
Whose mate hath perish'd in a distant land.
Thou could'st thyself, no doubt, my hoary friend!

(Would any furnish thee with decent vest
And mantle) fabricate a tale with ease;
Yet sure it is that dogs and fowls, long since,
His skin have stript, or fishes of the Deep
Have eaten him, and on some distant shore
Whelm'd in deep sands his mouldering bones are laid.
So hath he perish'd; whence, to all his friends,
But chiefly to myself, sorrow of heart;
For such another Lord, gentle as he,
Wherever sought, I have no hope to find,
Though I should wander even to the house
Of my own father. Neither yearns my heart
So feelingly (though that desiring too)
To see once more my parents and my home,
As to behold Ulysses yet again.
Ah stranger! absent as he is, his name
Fills me with reverence, for he loved me much,
Cared for me much, and though we meet no more,
Holds still an elder brother's part in me.
Him answer'd then, the Hero toil-inured.
My friend! since his return, in thy account,
Is an event impossible, and thy mind
Always incredulous that hope rejects,
I shall not slightly speak, but with an oath.—
Ulysses comes again; and I demand
No more, than that the boon such news deserves,
Be given me soon as he shall reach his home.
Then give me vest and mantle fit for wear,
Which, ere that hour, much as I need them both,
I neither ask, nor will accept from thee.

For him whom poverty can force aside
From truth—I hate him as the gates of hell.
Be Jove, of all in heaven, my witness first,
Then, this thy hospitable board, and last,
The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
Himself, Ulysses, to whose gates I go,
That all my words shall surely be fulfill'd.
In this same year Ulysses shall arrive,
Ere, this month closed, another month succeed,
He shall return, and punish all who dare
Insult his consort and his noble son.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Old friend! that boon thou ne'er wilt earn from me;
Ulysses comes no more. But thou thy wine
Drink quietly, and let us find, at length,
Some other theme; recall not this again
To my remembrance, for my soul is grieved
Oft as reminded of my honour'd Lord.
Let the oath rest, and let Ulysses come
Even as myself, and as Penelope,
And as his ancient father, and his son
Godlike Telemachus, all wish he may.
Ay—there I feel again—nor cease to mourn
His son Telemachus; who, when the Gods
Had given him growth like a young plant, and I
Well hoped that nought inferior he should prove
In person or in mind to his own sire,
Hath lost, through influence human or divine,
I know not how, his sober intellect,
And after tidings of his sire is gone

To far-famed Pylus; his return, meantime,
In ambush hidden the proud suitors wait,
That the whole house may perish of renown'd
Arcesias, named in Ithaca no more.
But whether he have fallen or 'scaped, let him
Rest also, whom Saturnian Jove protect!
But come, my ancient guest! now let me learn
Thy own afflictions; answer me in truth.
Who, and whence art thou? in what city born?
Where dwell thy parents? in what kind of ship
Camest thou? the mariners, why brought they thee
To Ithaca? and of what land are they?
For that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure.
  Him answer'd then Ulysses ever-wise.
I will with truth resolve thee; and if here
Within thy cottage sitting, we had wine
And food for many a day, and business none
But to regale at ease while others toil'd,
I could exhaust the year complete, my woes
Rehearsing, nor at last, rehearse entire
My sorrows by the will of heaven sustain'd.
  I boast me sprung from ancestry renown'd
In spacious Crete; son of a wealthy sire,
Who other sons train'd numerous in his house,
Born of his wedded wife: but he begat
Me on his purchased concubine, whom yet
Dear as his other sons in wedlock born
Castor Hylacides esteem'd and loved,
For him I boast my father. Him in Crete,
While yet he lived, all reverenced as a God,

So rich, so prosperous, and so blest was he
With sons of highest praise. But death, the doom
Of all, him bore to Pluto's drear abode,
And his illustrious sons among themselves
Portion'd his goods by lot; to me, indeed,
They gave a dwelling, and but little more;
Yet, for my virtuous qualities, I won
A wealthy bride, for I was neither vain
Nor base, forlorn as thou perceivest me now.
But thou canst guess, I judge, viewing the straw
What once was in the ear. Ah! I have borne
Much tribulation; heap'd and heavy woes.
Courage and phalanx-breaking might had I
From Mars and Pallas; at what time I drew,
(Planning some dread exploit) an ambush forth
Of our most valiant Chiefs, no boding fears
Of death seized *me*, but foremost far of all
I sprang to fight, and pierced the flying foe.
Such was I once in arms. But household toils
Sustain'd for children' sake, and carking cares
To enrich a family, were not for me.
My pleasures were the gallant bark, the din
Of battle, the smooth spear and glittering shaft,
Objects of dread to others, but which me
The Gods disposed to love and to enjoy.
Thus different minds are differently amused;
For ere Achaia's fleet had sail'd to Troy,
Nine times was I commander of an host
Embark'd against a foreign foe, and found
In all those enterprizes great success.

From the whole booty, first, what pleased me most
Choosing, and sharing also much by lot
I rapidly grew rich, and had thenceforth
Among the Cretans reverence and respect.
But when loud-thundering Jove that voyage dire
Ordain'd, which loosed the knees of many a Greek,
Then to Idomeneus and me they gave
The charge of all their fleet, which how to avoid
We found not, so importunate the cry
Of the whole host impell'd us to the task.
There fought we nine long years, and in the tenth
(Priam's proud city pillaged) steer'd again
Our galleys homeward, which the Gods dispersed.
Then was it that deep-planning Jove devised
For me much evil. One short month, no more,
I gave to joys domestic, in my wife
Happy, and in my babes, and in my wealth,
When the desire seized me with several ships
Well-rigg'd, and furnish'd all with gallant crews,
To sail for Ægypt; nine I fitted forth,
To which stout mariners assembled fast.
Six days the chosen partners of my voyage
Feasted, to whom I numerous victims gave
For sacrifice, and for their own regale.
Embarking on the seventh from spacious Crete,
Before a clear breeze prosperous from the North
We glided easily along, as down
A river's stream; nor one of all my ships
Damage incurr'd, but healthy and at ease
We sat, while gales well-managed urged us on.

The fifth day thence, smooth-flowing Nile we reach'd,
And safe I moor'd in the Ægyptian stream.
Then, charging all my mariners to keep
Strict watch for preservation of the ships,
I order'd spies into the hill-tops; but they
Under the impulse of a spirit rash
And hot for quarrel, the well-cultured fields
Pillaged of the Ægyptians, captive led
Their wives and little ones, and slew the men.
Soon was the city alarm'd, and at the cry
Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
With horse and foot and with the gleam of arms
Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
Struck all my people; none found courage more
To stand, for mischief swarm'd on every side.
There, numerous by the glittering spear we fell
Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
Alive to servitude. But Jove himself
My bosom with this thought inspired, (I would
That, dying, I had first fulfill'd my fate
In Ægypt, for new woes were yet to come!)
Loosing my brazen casque, and slipping off
My buckler, there I left them on the field,
Then cast my spear away, and seeking, next,
The chariot of the sovereign, clasp'd his knees,
And kiss'd them. He, by my submission moved,
Deliver'd me, and to his chariot-seat
Raising, convey'd me weeping to his home.
With many an ashen spear his warriors sought
To slay me, (for they now grew fiery-wroth)

But he through fear of hospitable Jove,
Chief punisher of wrong, saved me alive.
Seven years I there abode, and much amass'd
Among the Ægyptians, gifted by them all;
But, in the eighth revolving year, arrived
A shrew'd Phœnician, in all fraud adept,
Hungry, and who had numerous harm'd before,
By whom I also was cajoled, and lured
To attend him to Phœnicia, where his house
And his possessions lay; there I abode
A year complete his inmate; but (the days
And months accomplish'd of the rolling year,
And the new seasons entering on their course,)
To Libya then, on board his bark, by wiles
He won me with him, partner of the freight
Profess'd, but destined secretly to sale,
That he might profit largely by my price.
Not unsuspicious, yet constrain'd to go,
With this man I embark'd. A cloudless gale
Propitious blowing from the North, our ship
Ran right before it through the middle sea,
In the offing over Crete; but adverse Jove
Destruction plann'd for them and death the while.
For, Crete now left afar, and other land
Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
A cloud cœrulean hung, darkening the Deep.
Then, thundering oft, he hurl'd into the bark
His bolts; she smitten by the fires of Jove,
Quaked all her length; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,

And o'er her sides precipitated, plunged
Like gulls the crew, forbidden by that stroke
Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
But Jove himself, when I had cast away
All hope of life, conducted to my arms
The strong tall mast, that I might yet escape.
Around that beam I clung, driving before
The stormy blast. Nine days complete I drove,
And on the tenth dark night, the rolling flood
Immense convey'd me to Thesprotia's shore.
There me the Hero Phidon, generous King
Of the Thesprotians, freely entertain'd;
For his own son discovering me with toil
Exhausted and with cold, raised me, and thence
Led me humanely to his father's house,
Who cherish'd me, and gave me fresh attire.
There heard I of Ulysses, whom himself
Had entertain'd, he said, on his return
To his own land; he shew'd me also gold,
Brass, and bright steel elaborate, whatsoe'er
Ulysses had amass'd, a store to feed
A less illustrious family than his
To the tenth generation, so immense
His treasures in the royal palace lay.
Himself, he said, was to Dodona gone,
There, from the towering oaks of Jove to ask
Counsel divine, if openly to land
(After long absence) in his opulent realm
Of Ithaca, be best, or in disguise.
To me the monarch swore, in his own hall

Pouring libation, that the ship was launch'd,
And the crew ready for his conduct home.
But me he first dismiss'd, for, as it chanced,
A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
To green Dulichium's isle. He bade the crew
Bear me to King Acastus with all speed;
But them far other thoughts pleased more, and thoughts
Of harm to me, that I might yet be plunged
In deeper gulfs of woe than I had known.
For when the billow-cleaving bark had left
The land remote framing combined a plot
Against my liberty, they stripp'd my vest
And mantle, and this tatter'd raiment foul
Gave me instead, which thy own eyes behold.
At even-tide reaching the cultured coast
Of Ithaca, they left me bound on board
With tackle of the bark, and quitting ship
Themselves, made hasty supper on the shore.
But me, meantime, the Gods easily loosed
By their own power, when with this wrapper vile
Around my brows, sliding into the sea
At the ship's stern, I lay'd me on the flood.
With both hands oaring thence my course, I swam
Till past all ken of theirs; then landing where
Thick covert of luxuriant trees I mark'd,
Close couchant down I lay; they muttering loud,
Paced to and fro, but deeming farther search
Unprofitable, soon embark'd again.
Thus baffling all their search with ease, the Gods
Conceal'd and led me thence to the abode
Of a wise man, dooming me still to live.

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Like gulls the crew, forbidden by that stroke
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Of a wise man, dooming me still to live.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Alas! my most compassionable guest!
Thou hast much moved me by this tale minute
Of thy sad wanderings and thy numerous woes.
But speaking of Ulysses, thou hast pass'd
All credence; I at least can give thee none.
Why, noble as thou art, should'st thou invent
Palpable falsehoods? as for the return
Of my regretted Lord, myself I know
That had he not been hated by the Gods
Unanimous, he had in battle died
At Troy, or (that long doubtful war, at last,
Concluded,) in his people's arms at home.
Then universal Greece had raised his tomb,
And he had even for his son atchieved
Immortal glory; but alas! by beaks
Of harpies torn, unseemly sight, he lies.
Here is my home the while; I never seek
The city, unless summon'd by discrete
Penelope to listen to the news
Brought by some stranger, whencesoe'er arrived.
Then, all, alike inquisitive, attend,
Both who regret the absence of our King,
And who rejoice gratuitous to gorge
His property; but as for me, no joy
Find I in listening after such reports,
Since an Ætolian cozen'd me, who found
(After long wandering over various lands
A fugitive for blood,) my lone retreat.
Him warm I welcom'd, and with open arms
Received, who bold affirm'd that he had seen

My master with Idomeneus in Crete
His ships refitting shatter'd by a storm,
And that in summer with his godlike band
He would return, bringing great riches home,
Or else in autumn. And thou ancient guest
Forlorn! since thee the Gods have hither led,
Seek not to gratify me with untruths
And to deceive me, since for no such cause
I shall respect or love thee, but alone
By pity influenced, and the fear of Jove.
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
Thou hast, in truth, a most incredulous mind,
Whom even with an oath I have not moved,
Or aught persuaded. Come then—let us make
In terms express a covenant, and the Gods
Who hold Olympus, witness to us both!
If thy own Lord at this thy house arrive,
Thou shalt dismiss me decently attired
In vest and mantle, that I may repair
Hence to Dulichium, whither I would go.
But if thy Lord come not, then, gathering all
Thy servants, headlong hurl me from a rock,
That other mendicants may fear to lie.
To whom the generous swine-herd in return.
Yes, stranger! doubtless I should high renown
Obtain for virtue among men, both now
And in all future times, if, having first
Invited thee, and at my board regaled,
I next should slay thee; then my prayers would mount,
Past question, swiftly to Saturnian Jove.

But the hour calls to supper, and ere long,
The partners of my toils will come prepared
To spread the board with no unsavoury cheer.
Thus they conferr'd. And now the swains arrived,
Driving their charge, which fast they soon enclosed
Within their customary penns, and loud
The hubbub was of swine prison'd within.
Then call'd the master to his rustic train.
Bring ye the best, that we may set him forth
Before my friend from foreign climes arrived,
With whom ourselves will also feast, who find
The bright-tusk'd multitude a painful charge,
While others, at no cost of theirs, consume
Day after day, the profit of our toils.
So saying, his wood for fuel he prepared,
And, dragging thither a well fatted brawn
Of the fifth year, his servants held him fast
At the hearth-side. Nor fail'd the master swain
To adore the Gods, (for wise and good was he,)
But consecration of the victim, first,
Himself performing, cast into the fire
The forehead bristles of the tusky boar,
Then pray'd to all above, that safe at length,
Ulysses might regain his native home.
Then lifting an huge shive that lay beside
The fire, he smote the boar, and dead he fell.
Next, piercing him, and scorching close his hair,
They carved him quickly, and Eumæus spread
Thin slices crude taken from every limb
O'er all his fat, then other slices cast,

Sprinkling them first with meal, into the fire.
The rest they slash'd and scored, and roasted well,
And placed it, heap'd together, on the board.
Then rose the good Eumæus to his task
Of distribution, for he understood
The hospitable entertainer's part.
Seven-fold partition of the banquet made,
He gave, with previous prayer, to Maia's[3] son
And to the nymphs one portion of the whole,
Then served his present guests, honouring first
Ulysses with the boar's perpetual chine;
By that distinction just his master's heart
He gratified, and thus the Hero spake.
Eumæus! be thou as beloved of Jove
As thou art dear to me, whom, though attired
So coarsely, thou hast served with such respect!
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Eat noble stranger! and refreshment take
Such as thou may'st; God[4] gives, and God denies
At his own will, for He is Lord of all.
He said, and to the everlasting Gods
The firstlings sacrificed of all, then made

[3] Mercury.

[4] Θεος—without a relative, and consequently signifying God in the abstract, is not unfrequently found in Homer, though fearing to give offence to serious minds unacquainted with the original, I have not always given it that force in the translation. But here the sentiment is such as fixes the sense intended by the author with a precision that leaves me no option. It is observable too, that—*δυναται γαρ απαντα*—is an inscription of power such as the poet never makes to his Jupiter.

Libation, and the cup placed in the hands
Of city-spoiler Laertiades
Sitting beside his own allotted share.
Meantime, Mesaulius bread dispensed to all,
Whom in the absence of his Lord, himself
Eumæus had from Taphian traders bought
With his own proper goods, at no expence
Either to old Laertes or the Queen.
And now, all stretch'd their hands toward the feast
Reeking before them, and when hunger none
Felt more or thirst, Mesaulius clear'd the board.
Then, fed to full satiety, in haste
Each sought his couch. Black came a moonless night,
And Jove all night descended fast in showers,
With howlings of the ever watery West.
Ulysses, at that sound, for trial's sake
Of his good host, if putting off his cloak
He would accommodate him, or require
That service for him at some other hand,
Addressing thus the family, began.
  Hear now, Eumæus, and ye other swains
His fellow-labourers! I shall somewhat boast,
By wine befool'd, which forces even the wise
To carol loud, to titter and to dance,
And words to utter, oft, better suppress'd.
But since I have begun, I shall proceed,
Prating my fill. Ah might those days return
With all the youth and strength that I enjoy'd,
When in close ambush, once, at Troy we lay!
Ulysses, Menelaus, and myself

Their chosen coadjutor, led the band.
Approaching to the city's lofty wall
Through the thick bushes and the reeds that gird
The bulwarks, down we lay flat in the marsh,
Under our arms. Then, Boreas blowing loud,
A rueful night came on, frosty and charged
With snow that blanched us thick as morning rime,
And every shield with ice was chrystall'd o'er.
The rest with cloaks and vests well cover'd, slept
Beneath their bucklers; I alone my cloak,
Improvident, had left behind, no thought
Conceiving of a season so severe;
Shield and belt, therefore, and nought else had I.
The night, at length, nigh spent, and all the stars
Declining in their course, with elbow thrust
Against Ulysses' side I roused the Chief,
And thus address'd him ever prompt to hear.
  Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
I freeze to death. Help me, or I am lost.
No cloak have I; some evil dæmon, sure,
Beguiled me of all prudence, that I came
Thus sparely clad; I shall, I must expire.
  So I; he, ready as he was in arms
And counsel both, the remedy at once
Devised, and thus, low-whispering, answer'd me.
  Hush! lest perchance some other hear—He said,
And leaning on his elbow, spake aloud.
  My friends! all hear—a monitory dream
Hath reach'd me, for we lie far from the ships.
Haste, therefore, one of you, with my request

To Agamemnon, Atreus son, our Chief,
That he would reinforce us from the camp.
He spake, and at the word, Andræmon's son
Thoas arose, who, casting off his cloak,
Ran thence toward the ships, and folded warm
Within it, there lay I till dawn appear'd.
Oh for the vigour of such youth again!
Then, some good peasant here, either for love
Or for respect, would cloak a man like me,
Whom, now, thus sordid in attire ye scorn.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
My ancient guest! I cannot but approve
Thy narrative, nor hast thou utter'd aught
Unseemly, or that needs excuse. No want
Of raiment, therefore, or of aught beside
Needful to solace penury like thine,
Shall harm thee here; yet, at the peep of dawn
Gird thy own tatters to thy loins again;
For *we* have no great store of cloaks to boast,
Or change of vests, but, singly, one for each.
But when Ulysses' son shall once arrive,
He will himself with vest and mantle both
Cloath thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st.
So saying, he rose, and nearer made his couch
To the hearth-side, spreading it thick with skins
Of sheep and goats; then lay the Hero down,
O'er whom a shaggy mantle large he threw,
Which oft-times served him with a change, when rough
The winter's blast and terrible arose.
So was Ulysses bedded, and the youths

Slept all beside him; but the master-swain
Chose not his place of rest so far remote
From his rude charge, but to the outer court
With his nocturnal furniture, repair'd,
Gladdening Ulysses' heart that one so true
In his own absence kept his rural stores.
Athwart his sturdy shoulders first he slung
His faulchion keen, then wrapp'd him in a cloak
Thick woven, winter proof; he lifted, next,
The skin of a well-thriven goat, in bulk
Surpassing others, and his javelin took
Sharp-pointed, with which dogs he drove and men.
Thus arm'd, he sought his wonted couch beneath
A hollow rock where the herd slept, secure
From the sharp current of the Northern blast.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XV.

ARGUMENT OF THE FIFTEENTH BOOK.

Telemachus, admonished by Minerva, takes leave of Menelaus, but ere he sails, is accosted by Theoclymenus, a prophet of Argos, whom at his earnest request he takes on board. In the meantime Eumæus relates to Ulysses the means by which he came to Ithaca. Telemachus arriving there, gives orders for the return of his bark to the city, and repairs himself to Eumæus.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XV.

MEANTIME to Lacedæmon's spacious vale
Minerva went, that she might summon thence
Ulysses' glorious son to his own home.
Arrived, she found Telemachus reposed
And Nestor's son beneath the vestibule
Of Menelaus, mighty Chief; she saw
Pisistratus in bands of gentle sleep
Fast-bound, but not Telemachus; his mind
No rest enjoy'd, by filial cares disturb'd
Amid the silent night, when drawing near
To his couch side, the Goddess thus began.
  Thou canst no longer prudently remain
A wanderer here, Telemachus! thy home
Abandon'd, and those haughty suitors left
Within thy walls; fear lest, partition made
Of thy possessions, they devour the whole,
And in the end thy voyage bootless prove.
Delay not; from brave Menelaus ask
Dismission hence, that thou may'st find at home

Thy spotless mother, whom her brethren urge
And her own father even now to wed
Eurymachus, in gifts and in amount
Of proffer'd dower superior to them all.
Some treasure, else, shall haply from thy house
Be taken, such as thou wilt grudge to spare.
For well thou know'st how woman is disposed;
Her whole anxiety is to encrease
His substance whom she weds; no care hath she
Of her first children, or remembers more
The buried husband of her virgin choice.
Returning, then, to her of all thy train
Whom thou shalt most approve, the charge commit
Of thy concerns domestic, till the Gods
Themselves shall guide thee to a noble wife.
Hear also this, and mark it. In the frith
Samos the rude, and Ithaca between,
The chief of all her suitors thy return
In vigilant ambush wait, with strong desire
To slay thee, ere thou reach thy native shore,
But shall not, as I judge, till the earth hide
Many a lewd reveller at thy expence.
Yet steer thy galley from those isles afar,
And voyage make by night; some guardian God
Shall save thee, and shall send thee prosperous gales.
Then, soon as thou attain'st the nearest shore
Of Ithaca, dispatching to the town
Thy bark with all thy people, seek at once
The swine-herd; for Eumæus is thy friend.
There sleep, and send him forth into the town

With tidings to Penelope, that safe
Thou art restored from Pylus home again.
  She said, and sought the Olympian heights sublime.
Then, with his heel shaking him, he awoke
The son of Nestor, whom he thus address'd.
  Rise, Nestor's son, Pisistratus! lead forth
The steeds, and yoke them. We must now depart.
  To whom the son of Nestor thus replied.
Telemachus! what haste soe'er we feel,
We can by no means prudently attempt
To drive by night, and soon it will be dawn.
Stay, therefore, till the Hero, Atreus' son,
Spear-practised Menelaus shall his gifts
Place in the chariot, and with kind farewell
Dismiss thee; for the guest in memory holds
Through life, the host who treats him as a friend.
  Scarce had he spoken, when the golden dawn
Appearing, Menelaus, from the side
Of beauteous Helen risen, their bed approach'd,
Whose coming when Telemachus perceived,
Cloathing himself hastily in his vest
Magnificent, and o'er his shoulders broad
Casting his graceful mantle, at the door
He met the Hero, whom he thus address'd.
  Atrides Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
Dismiss me hence to Ithaca again,
My native isle, for I desire to go.
  Him answer'd Menelaus famed in arms.
Telemachus! I will not long delay
Thy wish'd return. I disapprove alike

The host whose assiduity extreme
Distresses, and whose negligence offends;
The middle course is best; alike we err,
Him thrusting forth whose wish is to remain,
And hindering the impatient to depart.
This only is true kindness—To regale
The present guest, and speed him when he would.
Yet stay, till thou shalt see my splendid gifts
Placed in thy chariot, and till I command
My women from our present stores to spread
The table with a plentiful repast.
For both the honour of the guest demands,
And his convenience also, that he eat
Sufficient, entering on a length of road.
But if through Hellas thou wilt take thy way
And traverse Argos, I will then myself
Attend thee; thou shalt journey with my steeds
Beneath thy yoke, and I will be thy guide
To many a city, whence we shall not go
Ungratified, but shall in each receive
Some gift at least, tripod, or charger bright,
Or golden chalice, or a pair of mules.
  To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Atrides Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
I would at once depart, (for guardian none
Of my possessions have I left behind,)
Lest, while I seek my father, I be lost
Myself, or lose what I should grudge to spare.
  Which when the valiant Menelaus heard,
He bade his spouse and maidens spread the board

At once with remnants of the last regale.
Then Eteoneus came, Boetheus' son
Newly arisen, for nigh at hand he dwelt,
Whom Menelaus bade kindle the fire
By which to dress their food, and he obey'd.
He, next, himself his fragrant chamber sought,
Not sole, but by his spouse and by his son
Attended, Megapenthes. There arrived
Where all his treasures lay, Atrides, first,
Took forth, himself, a goblet, then consign'd
To his son's hand an argent beaker bright.
Meantime, beside her coffers Helen stood
Where lay her variegated robes, fair works
Of her own hand. Producing one, in size
And in magnificence the chief, a star
For splendour, and the lowest placed of all,
Loveliest of her sex, she bore it thence.
Then, all proceeding through the house, they sought
Telemachus again, whom reaching, thus
The Hero of the golden locks began.
May Jove the Thunderer, dread Juno's mate,
Grant thee Telemachus! such voyage home
As thy own heart desires! accept from all
My stores selected as the richest far
And noblest gift for finish'd beauty—This.
I give thee wrought elaborate a cup,
Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.
It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
The Hero Phædimus imparted, King
Of the Sidonians, when on my return,
Beneath his roof I lodged. I make it thine.

So saying, the Hero, Atreus' son, the cup
Placed in his hands, and Megapenthes set
Before him, next, the argent beaker bright;
But lovely Helen drawing nigh, the robe
Presented to him, whom she thus address'd.
I also give thee, oh my son, a gift,
Which seeing, thou shalt think on her whose hands
Wrought it; a present on thy nuptial day
For thy fair spouse; meantime, repose it safe
In thy own mother's keeping. Now, farewell!
Prosperous and happy be thy voyage home!
She ceased, and gave it to him, who the gift
Accepted glad, and in the chariot-chest
Pisistratus the Hero all disposed,
Admiring them the while. They, following, next,
The Hero Menelaus to his hall
Each on his couch or on his throne reposed.
A maiden, then, with golden ewer charged
And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,
And spread the polish'd table, which with food
Various, selected from her present stores,
The mistress of the household charge supplied.
Boetheus' son stood carver, and to each
His portion gave, while Megapenthes, son
Of glorious Menelaus, served the cup.
Then, all with outstretch'd hands the feast assail'd,
And when nor hunger more nor thirst of wine
They felt, Telemachus and Nestor's son
Yoked the swift steeds, and, taking each his seat
In the resplendent chariot, drove at once
Right through the sounding portico abroad.

But Menelaus, Hero amber-hair'd,
A golden cup bearing with richest wine
Replete in his right hand, follow'd them forth,
That not without libation first perform'd
They might depart; he stood before the steeds,
And drinking first, thus, courteous, them bespake.
Health to you both, young friends! and from my lips
Like greeting bear to Nestor, royal Chief,
For he was ever as a father kind
To me, while the Achaians warr'd at Troy.
To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
And doubtless, so we will; at our return
We will report to him, illustrious Prince!
Thy every word. And oh, I would to heaven
That reaching Ithaca, I might at home
Ulysses hail as sure, as I shall hence
Depart, with all benevolence by thee
Treated, and rich in many a noble gift.
While thus he spake, on his right hand appear'd
An eagle; in his talons pounced he bore
A white-plumed goose domestic, newly taken
From the house court. Ran females all and males
Clamorous after him; but he the steeds
Approaching on the right, sprang into air.
That sight rejoicing and with hearts revived
They view'd, and thus Pisistratus his speech
Amid them all to Menelaus turn'd.
Now, Menelaus, think, illustrious Chief!
If us, this omen, or thyself regard.
While warlike Menelaus musing stood

What answer fit to frame, Helen meantime,
His spouse long-stoled preventing him, began.
Hear me; for I will answer as the Gods
Teach me, and as I think shall come to pass.
As he, descending from his place of birth
The mountains, caught our pamper'd goose away,
So shall Ulysses, after many woes
And wanderings to his home restored, avenge
His wrongs, or even now is at his home
For all those suitors sowing seeds of woe.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Oh grant it Jove, Juno's high-thundering mate!
So will I, there arrived, with vow and prayer
Thee worship, as thou wert thyself divine.
He said, and lash'd the coursers; fiery they
And fleet, sprang through the city to the plain.
All day the yoke on either side they shook,
Journeying swift; and now the setting sun
To gloomy evening had resign'd the roads,
When they to Pheræ came, and in the house
Of good Diocles slept, their liberal host,
Whose sire Orsilochus from Alpheus sprang.
But when Aurora, daughter of the Dawn,
Look'd rosy from the East, yoking their steeds,
They in the sumptuous chariot sat again.
Forth through the vestibule they drove, and through
The sounding portico, when Nestor's son
Plied brisk the scourge, and willing flew the steeds.
Thus whirl'd along, soon they approach'd the gates
Of Pylus, when Telemachus, his speech
Turning to his companion, thus began.

How, son of Nestor! shall I win from thee
Not promise only but performance kind
Of my request? we are not bound alone
To friendship by the friendship of our sires,
But by equality of years, and this
Our journey shall unite us still the more.
Bear me not, I entreat thee, noble friend!
Beyond the ship, but drop me at her side,
Lest ancient Nestor, though against my will,
Detain me in his palace through desire
To feast me, for I dread the least delay.
He spake; then mused Pisistratus how best
He might effect the wishes of his friend,
And thus at length resolved; turning his steeds
With sudden deviation to the shore
He sought the bark, and placing in the stern
Both gold and raiment, the illustrious gifts
Of Menelaus, thus, in accents wing'd
With ardour, urged Telemachus away.
Dispatch, embark, summon thy crew on board,
Ere my arrival notice give of thine
To the old King; for vehement I know
His temper, neither will he let thee hence,
But, hasting hither, will himself enforce
Thy longer stay, that thou may'st not depart
Ungifted; nought will fire his anger more.
So saying, he to the Pylian city urged
His steeds bright-maned, and at the palace-gate
Arrived of Nestor speedily; meantime
Telemachus exhorted thus his crew.

My gallant friends! set all your tackle, climb
The sable bark, for I would now return.
He spake; they heard him gladly, and at once
All fill'd the benches. While his voyage he
Thus expedited, and beside the stern
To Pallas sacrifice perform'd and pray'd,
A stranger, born remote, who had escaped
From Argos' fugitive for blood, a seer,
And of Melampus' progeny approach'd.
Melampus, in old time, in Pylus dwelt,
Mother of flocks, alike for wealth renown'd
And the magnificence of his abode.
He, flying from the far-famed Pylian King,
The mighty Neleus, migrated at length
Into another land, whose wealth, the while,
Neleus by force possess'd a year complete.
Meantime, Melampus in the house endured
[1] Of Phylacus imprisonment and woe,
And burn'd with wrath for Neleus' daughter sake
By fell Erynnis kindled in his heart.
But 'scaping death, he drove the lowing beeves
From Phylace to Pylus, well avenged
His numerous injuries at Neleus' hands

[1] Iphyclus the son of Phylacus had seized and detained cattle belonging to Neleus; Neleus ordered his nephew Melampus to recover them, and as security for his obedience seized on a considerable part of his possessions. Melampus attempted the service, failed, and was cast into prison; but at length escaping, accomplish'd his errand, vanquish'd Neleus in battle, and carried off his daughter Pero, whom Neleus had promised to the brother of Melampus, but had afterward refused her.

Sustain'd, and gave into his brother's arms
King Neleus' daughter fair, the promised bride.
To Argos steed-renown'd he journey'd next,
There destined to inhabit and to rule
Multitudes of Achaians. In that land
He married, built a palace, and became
Father of two brave sons, Antiphates
And Mantius; to Antiphates was born
The brave Oïcleus; from Oïcleus sprang
Amphiaraus, demagogue renown'd,
Whom with all tenderness, and as a friend
Alike the Thunderer and Apollo prized;
Yet reach'd he not the bounds of hoary age,
But by his mercenary[2] consort's arts
Persuaded, met his destiny at Thebes.
He 'gat Alcmæon and Amphilochus.
Mantius was also father of two sons,
Clytus and Polyphides. Clytus pass'd
From earth to heaven, and dwells among the Gods,
Stolen by Aurora for his beauty's sake.
But (brave Amphiaraüs once deceased)
Phœbus exalted Polyphides far
Above all others in the prophet's part.
He, anger'd by his father, roam'd away
To Hyperesia, where he dwelt renown'd
Throughout all lands, the oracle of all.
His son, named Theoclymenus, was he

[2] His wife Eryphyle, bribed by Polynices, persuaded him, though aware that death awaited him at that city, to go to Th where he fell accordingly.

Who now approach'd; he found Telemachus
Libation offering in his bark, and prayer,
And in wing'd accents ardent him address'd.
Ah, friend! since sacrificing in this place
I find thee, by these sacred rites and those
Whom thou ador'st, and by thy own dear life,
And by the lives of these thy mariners
I beg true answer; hide not what I ask.
Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from whom?
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
I will inform thee, stranger! and will solve
Thy questions with much truth. I am by birth
Ithacan, and Ulysses was my sire.
But he hath perish'd by a woeful death,
And I, believing it, with these have plow'd
The Ocean hither, interested to learn
A father's fate long absent from his home.
Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus.
I also am a wanderer, having slain
A man of my own tribe; brethren and friends
Numerous had he in Argos steed-renown'd,
And powerful are the Achaians dwelling there.
From them, through terrour of impending death,
I fly, a banish'd man henceforth for ever.
Ah, save a suppliant fugitive! lest death
O'ertake me, for I doubt not their pursuit.
Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discrete.
I shall not, be assured, since thou desirest
To join me, chace thee from my bark away.

Follow me, therefore, and with us partake,
In Ithaca, what best the land affords.
So saying, he at the stranger's hand received
His spear, which on the deck he lay'd, then climb'd
Himself the bark, and seated in the stern,
At his own side placed Theoclymenus.
They cast the hawsers loose; then with loud voice
Telemachus exhorted all to hand
The tackle, whom his sailors prompt obey'd.
The tall mast heaving, in its socket deep
They lodged it, and its cordage braced secure,
Then, straining at the halyards, hoised the sail.
Fair wind, and blowing fresh through æther pure
Minerva sent them, that the bark might run
Her nimblest course through all the briny way.
Now sank the sun, and dusky evening dimm'd
The waves, when, driven by propitious Jove,
His bark stood right for Pheræ; thence she stretch'd
To sacred Elis, where the Epeans rule,
And through the sharp Echinades he next
Steer'd her, uncertain whether fate ordain'd
His life or death, surprizal or escape.
Meantime Ulysses and the swineherd ate
Their cottage-mess, and the assistant swains
Theirs also; and when hunger now and thirst
Had ceased in all, Ulysses thus began,
Proving the swineherd, whether friendly still,
And anxious for his good, he would entreat
His stay, or thence hasten him to the town.
Eumæus, and all ye his servants, hear!

It is my purpose, lest I wear thee out,
Thee and thy friends, to seek at early dawn
The city, there to beg:—but give me first
Needful instructions, and a trusty guide
Who may conduct me thither; there my task
Must be to roam the streets; some hand humane
Perchance shall give me a small pittance there,
A little bread, and a few drops to drink.
Ulysses' palace I shall also seek,
And to discrete Penelope report
My tidings; neither shall I fail to mix
With those imperious suitors, who, themselves
Full-fed, may spare perhaps some boon to me.
Me shall they find, in whatsoe'er they wish
Their ready servitor, for (understand
And mark me well,) the herald of the skies,
Hermes, from whom all actions of mankind
Their grace receive and polish, is my friend;
So that in menial offices I fear
No rival, whether I be call'd to heap
The hearth with fuel, or dry wood to cleave,
To roast, to carve, or to distribute wine,
As oft the poor are wont who serve the great.
To whom, Eumæus! at those words displeased,
Thou didst reply. Gods! how could such a thought
Possess thee, stranger? surely thy resolve
Is altogether fixt to perish there,
If thou indeed hast purposed with that throng
To mix, whose riot and outrageous acts
Of violence echo through the vault of heaven.

None, such as thou, serve *them;* their servitors
Are youths well-cloak'd, well-vested; sleek their heads,
And smug their countenances; such alone
Are their attendants, and the polish'd boards
Groan overcharged with bread, with flesh, with wine.
Rest here content; for neither me nor these
Thou weariest aught, and when Ulysses' son
Shall come, he will with vest and mantle fair
Cloath thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st
To whom, Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
I wish thee, O Eumæus! dear to Jove
As thou art dear to me, for this reprieve
Vouchsafed me kind, from wandering and from woe!
No worse condition is of mortal man
Than his who wanders; for the poor man, driven
By woe and by misfortune homeless forth,
A thousand miseries, day by day, endures.
Since thou detain'st me then, and bidd'st me wait
His coming, tell me if the father still
Of famed Ulysses live, whom, going hence,
He left so nearly on the verge of life?
And lives his mother? or have both deceased
Already, and descended to the shades?
To whom the master swineherd thus replied.
I will inform thee, and with strictest truth,
Of all that thou hast ask'd. Laertes lives,
But supplication offering to the Gods
Ceaseless, to free him from a weary life,
So deeply his long-absent son he mourns,

And the dear consort of his early youth,
Whose death is his chief sorrow, and hath brought
Old age on him, or ere its date arrived.
She died of sorrow for her glorious son,
And died deplorably[3]; may never friend
Of mine, or benefactor die as she!
While yet she lived, dejected as she was,
I found it yet some solace to converse
With her, who rear'd me in my childish days,
Together with her lovely youngest-born
The Princess Ctimena; for side by side
We grew, and I, scarce honour'd less than she.
But soon as our delightful prime we both
Attain'd, to Samos her they sent, a bride,
And were requited with rich dower; but me
Clothed handsomely with tunic and with vest,
And with fair sandals furnish'd, to the field
She order'd forth, yet loved me still the more.
I miss her kindness now; but gracious heaven
Prospers the work on which I here attend;
Hence have I food, and hence I drink, and hence
Refresh sometimes a worthy guest like thee.
But kindness none experience I, or can,
From fair Penelope (my mistress now)
In word or action, so is the house cursed
With that lewd throng. Glad would the servants be
Might they approach their mistress, and receive
Advice from her; glad too to eat and drink,

[3] She is said to have hanged herself.

And somewhat bear each to his rural home,
For perquisites are every servant's joy.
  Then answer thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
Alas! good swain, Eumæus, how remote
From friends and country wast thou forced to roam
Even in thy infancy! But tell me true.
The city where thy parents dwelt, did foes
Pillage it? or did else some hostile band
Surprising thee alone, on herd or flock
Attendant, bear thee with them o'er the Deep,
And sell thee at this Hero's house, who pay'd
Doubtless for *thee* no sordid price or small?
  To whom the master swineherd in reply.
Stranger! since thou art curious to be told
My story, silent listen, and thy wine
At leisure quaff. The nights are longest now,
And such as time for sleep afford, and time
For pleasant conference; neither were it good
That thou should'st to thy couch before thy hour,
Since even sleep is hurtful, in excess.
Whoever here is weary, and desires
Early repose, let him depart to rest,
And at the peep of day, when he hath fed
Sufficiently, drive forth my master's herd;
But we with wine and a well-furnish'd board
Supplied, will solace mutually derive
From recollection of our sufferings past;
For who hath much endured, and wander'd far,
Finds the recital even of sorrow sweet.
Now hear thy question satisfied; attend!

There is an island (thou hast heard, perchance,
Of such an isle,) named Syria[4]; it is placed
Above Ortygia, and a dial[5] owns
True to the tropic changes of the year.
No great extent she boasts, yet is she rich
In cattle and in flocks, in wheat and wine.
No famine knows that people, or disease
Noisome of all that elsewhere seize the race
Of miserable man; but when old age
Steals on the the citizens, Apollo, arm'd
With silver bow and bright Diana come,
Whose gentle shafts dismiss them soon to rest.
Two cities share between them all the isle,
And both were subject to my father's sway
Ctesius Ormenides, a godlike Chief.
It chanced that from Phœnicia, famed for skill
In arts marine, a vessel thither came
By sharpers mann'd, and laden deep with toys.
Now, in my father's family abode
A fair Phœnician, tall, full-sized, and skill'd
In works of elegance, whom they beguiled.
While she wash'd linen on the beach, beside

[4] Not improbably the isthmus of Syracuse, an island, perhaps, or peninsula at that period, or at least imagined to be such by Homer. The birth of Diana gave fame to Ortygia. F.

[5] Ὅθι τροπαὶ ἠελίοιο.—The Translator has rendered the passage according to that interpretation of it to which several of the best expositors incline. Nothing can be so absurd as to suppose, that Homer, so correct in his geography, could mean to place a Mediterranean island under the Tropic.

The ship, a certain mariner of those
Seduced her; for all women, even the wise
And sober, feeble prove by love assail'd.
Who was she, he enquired, and whence? nor she
Scrupled to tell at once her father's home.
I am of Sidon[6], famous for her works
In brass and steel; daughter of Arybas,
Who rolls in affluence; Taphian pirates thence
Stole me returning from the field, from whom
This Chief procured me at no little cost.
Then answer thus her paramour return'd.
Wilt thou not hence to Sidon in our ship,
That thou may'st once more visit the abode
Of thy own wealthy parents, and themselves?
For still they live, and still are wealthy deem'd.
To whom the woman. Even that might be,
Would ye, ye seamen, by a solemn oath
Assure me of a safe conveyance home.
Then sware the mariners as she required,
And, when their oath was ended, thus again
The woman of Phœnicia them bespake.
Now, silence! no man henceforth, of you all
Accost me, though he meet me on the road,
Or at yon fountain; lest some tattler run
With tidings home to my old master's ear,
Who, with suspicion touch'd, may *me* confine
In cruel bonds, and death contrive for *you*.
But be ye close; purchase your stores in haste;

[6] A principal city of Phœnicia.

And when your vessel shall be freighted full,
Quick send me notice ; for I mean to bring
What gold soever opportune I find,
And will my passage cheerfully defray
With still another moveable. I nurse
The good man's son, an urchin shrewd, of age
To scamper at my side ; him will I bring,
Whom at some foreign market ye shall prove
Saleable at what price soe'er ye will.
So saying, she to my father's house return'd.
They, there abiding the whole year, their ship
With purchased goods freighted of every kind,
And when her lading now complete, she lay
For sea prepared, their messenger arrived
To summon down the woman to the shore.
A mariner of theirs, subtle and shrewd,
Then, entering at my father's gate, produced
A splendid collar, gold with amber strung.
My mother (then at home) with all her maids
Handling and gazing on it with delight,
Proposed to purchase it, and he the nod
Significant, gave unobserved, the while,
To the Phœnician woman, and return'd.
She, thus inform'd, leading me by the hand
Went forth, and finding in the vestibule
The cups and tables which my father's guests
Had used, (but they were to the forum gone
For converse with their friends assembled there,)
Convey'd three cups into her bosom-folds,
And bore them off, whom I a thoughtless child

Accompanied, at the decline of day,
When dusky evening had embrown'd the shore.
We, stepping nimbly on, soon reach'd the port
Renown'd, where that Phœnician vessel lay.
They shipp'd us both, and all embarking cleaved
Their liquid road by favourable gales,
Jove's gift, impell'd. Six days we day and night
Continual sail'd, but when Saturnian Jove
Now bade the seventh bright morn illume the skies,
Then shaft-arm'd Dian struck the woman dead.
At once she pitch'd headlong into the bilge
Like a sea-coot, whence heaving her again,
The seamen gave her to be fishes' food,
And I survived to mourn her. But the winds
And rolling billows them bore to the coast
Of Ithaca, where with his proper goods
Laertes bought me. By such means it chanced
That ere I saw the isle in which I dwell.
  To whom Ulysses, glorious Chief replied.
Eumæus! thou hast moved me much, thy woes
Enumerating thus at large. But Jove
Hath neighbour'd all thy evil with this good,
That after numerous sorrows thou hast reach'd
The house of a kind master, at whose hands
Thy sustenance is sure, and here thou lead'st
A tranquil life; but I have late arrived,
City after city of the world explored.
  Thus mutual they conferr'd, nor leisure found
Save for short sleep, by morning soon surprised.
Meantime the comrades of Telemachus

Approaching land, cast loose the sail, and lower'd
Alert the mast, then oar'd the vessel in.
The anchors heaved[7] aground, and hawsers tied
Secure, themselves, forth-issuing on the shore,
Breakfast prepared, and charged their cups with wine.
When neither hunger now, nor thirst remained
Unsatisfied, Telemachus began.
  Push ye the sable bark without delay
Home to the city. I will to the field
Among my shepherds, and, (my rural works
Survey'd,) at eve will to the town return.
To morrow will I set before you wine
And plenteous viands, wages of your toil.
  To whom the godlike Theoclymenus.
Whither must I, my son? who, of the Chiefs
Of rugged Ithaca, shall harbour me?
Shall I to thine and to thy mother's house?
  Then thus Telemachus, discrete, replied.
I would invite thee to proceed at once
To our abode, since nought should fail thee there
Of kind reception, but it were a course
Now not adviseable; for I must myself,
Be absent, neither would my mother's eyes
Behold thee, so unfrequent she appears
Before the suitors, shunning whom, she sits
Weaving continual at the palace-top.
But I will name to thee another Chief
Whom thou may'st seek, Eurymachus, the son

[7] The anchors were lodged on the shore, not plunged as ours.

Renown'd of prudent Polybus, whom all
The people here reverence as a God.
Far noblest of them all is he, and seeks
More ardent than his rivals far, to wed
My mother, and to fill my father's throne.
But, He who dwells above, Jove only knows
If some disastrous day be not ordain'd
For them, or ere those nuptials shall arrive.
While thus he spake, at his right hand appear'd,
Messenger of Apollo, on full wing,
A falcon; in his pounces clench'd he bore
A dove, which rending, down he pour'd her plumes
Between the galley and Telemachus.
Then calling him apart, the prophet lock'd
His hand in his, and thus explain'd the sign.
Not undirected by the Gods his flight
On our right hand, Telemachus! this hawk
Hath wing'd propitious; soon as I perceived
I knew him ominous.—In all the isle
No family of a more royal note
Than yours is found, and yours shall still prevail.
Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discrete.
Grant heaven, my guest! that this good word of thine
Fail not, and soon thou shalt such bounty share
And friendship at my hands, that at first sight,
Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.
Then, to Piræus thus, his friend approved.
Piræus, son of Clytius! (for of all
My followers to the shore of Pylus, none
More prompt than thou hath my desires perform'd,)

Now also to thy own abode conduct
This stranger, whom with hospitable care
Cherish and honour till myself arrive.
To whom Piræus answer'd, spear-renown'd.
Telemachus! however long thy stay,
Punctual I will attend him, and no want
Of hospitality shall he find with me.
So saying, he climb'd the ship, then bade the crew
Embarking also, cast the hawsers loose,
And each obedient to his bench repaired.
Meantime Telemachus his sandals bound,
And lifted from the deck his glittering spear.
Then as Telemachus had bidden them,
Son of divine Ulysses, casting loose
The hawsers, forth they push'd into the Deep
And sought the city; while with nimble pace
Proceeding thence, Telemachus attain'd
The cottage soon where good Eumæus slept,
The swine-herd, faithful to his numerous charge.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVI.

ARGUMENT OF THE SIXTEENTH BOOK.

Telemachus dispatches Eumæus to the city to inform Penelope of his safe return from Pylus; during his absence, Ulysses makes himself known to his son. The suitors, having watched for Telemachus in vain, arrive again at Ithaca.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVI.

It was the hour of dawn, when in the cot
Kindling fresh fire, Ulysses and his friend
Noble Eumæus dress'd their morning fare,
And sent the herdsmen with the swine abroad.
Seeing Telemachus, the watchful dogs
Bark'd not, but fawn'd around him. At that sight,
And at the sound of feet which now approach'd,
Ulysses in wing'd accents thus remark'd.
Eumæus! certain, either friend of thine
Is nigh at hand, or one whom well thou know'st;
Thy dogs bark not, but fawn on his approach
Obsequious, and the sound of feet I hear.
Scarce had he ceased, when his own son himself
Stood in the vestibule. Upsprang at once
Eumæus wonder-struck, and from his hand
Let fall the cups with which he was employ'd
Mingling rich wine; to his young Lord he ran,
His forehead kiss'd, kiss'd his bright-beaming eyes
And both his hands, weeping profuse the while.

As when a father holds in his embrace
Arrived from foreign lands in the tenth year
His darling son, the offspring of his age,
His only one, for whom he long hath mourn'd,
So kiss'd the noble peasant o'er and o'er
Godlike Telemachus, as from death escaped,
And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began.
Light of my eyes, thou comest; it is thyself,
Sweetest Telemachus! I had no hope
To see thee more, once told that o'er the Deep
Thou hadst departed for the Pylian coast.
Enter, my precious son; that I may sooth
My soul with sight of thee from far arrived,
For seldom thou thy feeders and thy farm
Visitest, in the city custom'd much
To make abode, that thou may'st witness there
The manners of those hungry suitors proud.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
It will be so. There is great need, my friend!
But here, for thy sake, have I now arrived,
That I may look on thee, and from thy lips
Learn if my mother still reside at home,
Or have become spouse of some other Chief,
Leaving untenanted Ulysses' bed
To be by noisome spiders webb'd around.
To whom the master-swineherd in return.
Not so, she, patient still as ever, dwells
Beneath thy roof, but all her cheerless days
Despairing wastes, and all her nights in tears.
So saying, Eumæus at his hand received

His brazen lance, and o'er the step of stone
Enter'd Telemachus, to whom his sire
Relinquish'd, soon as he appear'd, his seat,
But him Telemachus forbidding, said—
Guest, keep thy seat; our cottage will afford
Some other, which Eumæus will provide.
He ceased, and he, returning at the word,
Reposed again; then good Eumæus spread
Green twigs beneath, which, cover'd with a fleece,
Supplied Ulysses' offspring with a seat.
He next disposed his dishes on the board
With relics charged of yesterday; with bread,
Alert, he heap'd the baskets; with rich wine
His ivy-cup replenish'd; and a seat
Took opposite to his illustrious Lord
Ulysses. They toward the plenteous feast
Stretch'd forth their hands, (and hunger now and thirst
Both satisfied,) Telemachus, his speech
Addressing to their generous host, began.
Whence is this guest, my father? How convey'd
Came he to Ithaca? What country boast
The mariners with whom he here arrived?
For that on foot he found us not, is sure.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
I will with truth answer thee, O my son!
He boasts him sprung from ancestry renown'd
In spacious Crete, and hath the cities seen
Of various lands, by fate ordain'd to roam.
Even now, from a Thesprotian ship escaped,
He reach'd my cottage—but he is thy own;

I yield him to thee; treat him as thou wilt;
He is thy suppliant, and depends on thee.
Then thus, Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Thy words, Eumæus, pain my very soul.
For what security can I afford
To any in my house? myself am young,
Nor yet of strength sufficient to repel
An offer'd insult; and my mother's mind
In doubtful balance hangs, if still with me
An inmate, she shall manage my concerns,
Attentive only to her absent Lord
And her own good report, or shall espouse
The noblest of her wooers, and the best
Entitled by the splendour of his gifts.
But I will give him, since I find him lodged
A guest beneath thy roof, tunic and cloak,
Sword double-edged, and sandals to his feet,
With convoy to the country of his choice.
Still, if it please thee, keep him here thy guest,
And I will send him raiment, with supplies
Of all sorts, lest he burthen thee and thine.
But where the suitors come, there shall not he
With my consent, nor stand exposed to pride
And petulance like theirs, lest by some sneer
They wound him, and through him, wound also me;
For little is it that the boldest can
Against so many; numbers will prevail.
Him answer'd then Ulysses toil-inured.
Oh amiable and good! since even I
Am free to answer thee, I will avow

My heart within me torn by what I hear
Of those injurious suitors, who the house
Infest of one noble as thou appear'st.
But say—submittest thou to their controul
Willingly, or because the people, sway'd
By some response oracular, incline
Against thee? Thou hast brothers, it may chance,
Slow to assist thee,—for a brother's aid
Is of importance in whatever cause.
For oh that I had youth as I have will,
Or that renown'd Ulysses were my sire,
Or that myself might wander home again,
Whereof hope yet remains! then might I lose
My head, that moment, by an alien's hand,
If I would fail, entering Ulysses' gate,
To be the bane and mischief of them all.
But if alone to multitudes opposed
I should perchance be foiled, nobler it were
With my own people, under my own roof
To perish, than to witness evermore
Their unexampled deeds, guests shoved aside,
Maidens dragg'd forcibly from room to room,
Casks emptied of their rich contents, and them
Indulging gluttonous appetite day by day
Enormous, without measure, without end.
To whom, Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Stranger! thy questions shall from me receive
True answer. Enmity or hatred none
Subsists the people and myself between,
Nor have I brothers to accuse, whose aid

Is of importance in whatever cause,
For Jove hath from of old with single heirs
Our house supplied; Arcesias none begat
Except Laertes, and Laertes none
Except Ulysses, and Ulysses me
Left here his only one, and unenjoy'd.
Thence comes it that our palace swarms with foes;
For all the rulers of the neighbour-isles,
Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
Zacynthus, others also rulers here
In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek
In marriage, and my household stores consume.
But neither she those nuptial rites abhorr'd
Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
To end them; they my patrimony waste
Meantime, and will destroy me also soon,
As I expect, but heaven disposes all.
Eumæus! haste, my father! bear with speed
News to Penelope that I am safe,
And have arrived from Pylus; I will wait
Till thou return; and well beware that none
Hear thee beside, for I have many foes.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. But say beside,
Shall I not also, as I go, inform
Distress'd Laertes? who while yet he mourn'd
Ulysses only, could o'ersee the works,
And dieted among his menials oft
As hunger prompted him; but now, they say,

Since thy departure to the Pylian shore,
He neither eats as he was wont, nor drinks,
Nor oversees his hinds, but sighing sits
And weeping, wasted even to the bone.
  Him then Telemachus answer'd discrete.
Hard though it be, yet to his tears and sighs
Him leave we now. We cannot what we would.
For were the ordering of all events
Referr'd to our own choice, our first desire
Should be to see my father's glad return.
But once thy tidings told, wander not thou
In quest of Him, but hither speed again.
Rather request my mother that she send
Her household's governess without delay
Privately to him; she shall best inform
The ancient King that I have safe arrived.
  He said, and urged him forth, who binding on
His sandals, to the city bent his way.
Nor went Eumæus from his home unmark'd
By Pallas, who in semblance of a fair
Damsel, accomplish'd in domestic arts,
Approaching to the cottage' entrance, stood
Opposite, by Ulysses plain discern'd,
But to his son invisible; for the Gods
Appear not manifest alike to all.
The mastiffs saw her also, and with tone
Querulous hid themselves, yet bark'd they not.
She beckon'd him abroad. Ulysses saw
The sign, and issuing through the outer court,
Approach'd her, whom the Goddess thus bespake.

Laertes' progeny, for wiles renown'd!
Disclose thyself to thy own son, that death
Concerting and destruction to your foes,
Ye may the royal city seek, nor long
Shall ye my presence there desire in vain,
For I am ardent to begin the fight.
Minerva spake, and with her rod of gold
Touch'd him; his mantle, first, and vest she made
Pure as new-blanch'd; dilating, next, his form,
She gave dimensions ampler to his limbs;
Swarthy again his manly hue became,
Round his full face, and black his bushy chin.
The change perform'd, Minerva disappear'd,
And the illustrious Hero turn'd again
Into the cottage; wonder at that sight
Seized on Telemachus; askance he look'd,
Awe-struck, not unsuspicious of a God,
And in wing'd accents eager thus began.
Thou art no longer, whom I lately saw,
Nor are thy cloaths, nor is thy port the same.
Thou art a God, I know, and dwell'st in heaven.
Oh, smile on us, that we may yield thee rites
Acceptable, and present thee golden gifts
Elaborate; ah spare us, Power divine!
To whom Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
I am no God. Why deem'st thou me divine?
I am thy father, for whose sake thou lead'st
A life of woe, by violence oppress'd.
So saying, he kiss'd his son, while from his cheeks
Tears trickled, tears till then, perforce restrain'd.

Telemachus, (for he believed him not
His father yet,) thus wondering spake again.
My father, saidst thou? no. Thou art not He,
But some Divinity beguiles my soul
With mockeries, to afflict me still the more;
For never mortal man could so have wrought
By his own power; some interposing God
Alone could render thee both young and old,
For old thou wast of late, and foully clad,
But wear'st the semblance now of those in heaven!
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
Telemachus! it is not well, my son!
That thou should'st greet thy father with a face
Of wild astonishment, and stand aghast.
Ulysses, save myself, none comes, be sure.
Such as thou seest, after ten thousand woes
Which I have borne, I visit once again
My native country in the twentieth year.
This wonder Athenæan Pallas wrought,
She cloathed me even in what form she would,
For so she can. Now poor I seem and old,
Now young again, and clad in fresh attire.
The Gods who dwell in yonder heaven, with ease
Dignify or debase a mortal man.
So saying, he sat. Then threw Telemachus
His arms around his father's neck, and wept.
Desire intense of lamentation seized
On both; soft murmurs uttering, each indulged
His grief, more frequent wailing than the bird,
(Eagle, or hook-nail'd vulture) from whose nest

Some swain hath stolen her yet unfeather'd young.
So from their eyelids they big drops distill'd
Of tenderest grief, nor had the setting sun
Cessation of their weeping seen, had not
Telemachus his father thus address'd.
What ship convey'd thee to thy native shore,
My father! and what country boast the crew?
For that on foot thou not arrivedst, is sure.
Then thus divine Ulysses toil-inured.
My son! I will explicit all relate.
Conducted by Phæacia's maritime sons
I came, a race accustomed to convey
Strangers who visit them across the Deep.
Me o'er the billows in a rapid bark
Borne sleeping, on the shores of Ithaca
They lay'd; rich gifts they gave me also, brass,
Gold in full bags, and beautiful attire,
Which, warn'd from heaven, I have in caves conceal'd.
By Pallas prompted, hither I repair'd
That we might plan the slaughter of our foes,
Whose numbers tell me now, that I may know
How powerful, certainly, and who they are,
And consultation with my dauntless heart
May hold, if we be able to contend
Ourselves with all, or must have aid beside.
Then answer thus his son, discrete, return'd.
My father! thy renown hath ever rung
In thy son's ears, and by report thy force
In arms, and wisdom I have oft been told.
But terribly thou speak'st; amazement-fixt

I hear; can two a multitude oppose,
And valiant warriors all? For neither ten
Are they, nor twenty, but more numerous far.
Learn now their numbers. Fifty youths and two
Came from Dulichium; they are chosen men,
And six attendants follow in their train;
From Samos twenty youths and four arrive,
Zacynthus also of Achaia's sons
Sends twenty more, and our own island adds,
Herself, her twelve chief rulers; Medon, too,
Is there the herald, and the bard divine,
With other two, intendants of the board.
Should we within the palace, we alone,
Assail them all, I fear lest thy revenge
Unpleasant to thyself and deadly prove,
Frustrating thy return. But recollect—
Think, if thou canst, on whose confederate arm
Strenuous on our behalf we may rely.
To him replied his patient father bold.
I will inform thee. Mark. Weigh well my words.
Will Pallas and the everlasting Sire
Alone suffice? or need we other aids?
Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
Good friends indeed are they whom thou hast named,
Though throned above the clouds; for their controul
Is universal both in earth and heaven.
To whom Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd.
Not long will they from battle stand aloof,
When once within my palace, in the strength
Of Mars, to sharp decision we shall urge

The suitors. But thyself at early dawn
Our mansion seek, that thou may'st mingle there
With that imperious throng; me in due time
Eumæus to the city shall conduct,
In form a miserable beggar old.
But should they with dishonourable scorn
Insult me, thou unmoved my wrongs endure,
And should they even drag me by the feet
Abroad, or smite me with the spear, thy wrath
Refraining, gently counsel them to cease
From such extravagance; but well I know
That cease they will not, for their hour is come.
And mark me well; treasure what now I say
Deep in thy soul. When Pallas shall, herself,
Suggest the measure, then shaking my brows,
I will admonish thee; thou at the sign,
Remove what arms soever in the hall
Remain, and in the upper palace safe
Dispose them; should the suitors, missing them,
Perchance interrogate thee, then reply
Gently—I have removed them from the smoke;
For they appear no more the arms which erst
Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
But smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
This weightier reason (thou shalt also say,)
Jove taught me; lest, intoxicate with wine,
Ye should assault each other in your brawls,
Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
Itself of arms incites to their abuse.
Yet leave two faulchions for ourselves alone,

Two spears, two bucklers, which with sudden force,
Impetuous we will seize, and Jove all-wise
Their valour shall, and Pallas, steal away.
This word store also in remembrance deep—
If mine in truth thou art, and of my blood,
Then, of Ulysses to his home return'd
Let none hear news from thee, no, not my sire
Laertes, nor Eumæus, nor of all
The menials any, or even Penelope,
That thou and I, alone, may search the drift
Of our domestic women, and may prove
Our serving-men, who honours and reveres
And who contemns us both, but chiefly thee
So gracious, and so worthy to be loved.
Him then thus answer'd his illustrious son.
Trust me, my father! thou shalt soon be taught
That I am not of drowsy mind obtuse.
But this I think not likely to avail
Or thee or me; ponder it yet again;
For tedious were the task, farm after farm
To visit of those servants, proving each,
And the proud suitors merciless devour
Meantime thy substance, nor abstain from aught.
Learn, if thou wilt, (and I that course myself
Advise) who slights thee of the female train,
And who is guiltless; but I would not try
From house to house the men, far better proved
Hereafter, if in truth by signs from heaven
Inform'd, thou hast been taught the will of Jove.
Thus they conferr'd. The gallant bark, meantime,

Reach'd Ithaca, which from the Pylian shore
Had brought Telemachus with all his band.
Within the many-fathom'd port arrived
His lusty followers haled her far aground,
Then carried thence their arms, but to the house
Of Clytius the illustrious gifts convey'd.
Next to the royal mansion they dispatch'd
An herald, charged with tidings to the Queen,
That her Telemachus had reach'd the cot
Of good Eumæus, and the bark had sent
Home to the city; lest the matchless dame
Should still deplore the absence of her son.
They then, the herald and the swine-herd, each
Bearing like message to his mistress, met,
And at the palace of the godlike Chief
Arriving, compass'd by the female throng
Inquisitive, the herald thus began.

Thy son, O Queen! is safe; even now return'd.
Then, drawing nigh to her, Eumæus told
His message also from her son received,
And, his commission punctually discharged,
Leaving the palace, sought his home again.

Grief seized and anguish, at those tidings, all
The suitors; issuing forth, on the outside
Of the high wall they sat, before the gate,
When Polybus' son, Eurymachus, began.

My friends! his arduous task, this voyage, deem'd
By us impossible, in our despight
Telemachus hath atchieved. Haste! launch we forth
A sable bark, our best, which let us man

With mariners expert, who, rowing forth
Swiftly, shall summon our companions home.
  Scarce had he said, when turning where he sat,
Amphinomus beheld a bark arrived
Just then in port; he saw them furling sail,
And seated with their oars in hand; he laugh'd
Through pleasure at that sight, and thus he spake.
  Our message may be spared. Lo! they arrive.
Either some God inform'd them, or they saw,
Themselves, the vessel of Telemachus
Too swiftly passing to be reach'd by theirs.
  He spake; they, rising, hasted to the shore.
Alert they drew the sable bark aground,
And by his servant each his arms dispatch'd
To his own home. Then all to council close
Assembling, neither elder of the land
Nor youth allow'd to join them, and the rest
Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, thus bespake.
  Ah! how the Gods have rescued him! all day
Perch'd on the airy mountain-top, our spies
Successive watch'd; and when the sun declined,
We never slept on shore, but all night long
Till sacred dawn arose, plow'd the abyss,
Hoping Telemachus, that we might seize
And slay him, whom some Deity hath led,
In our despight, safe to his home again.
But frame we yet again means to destroy
Telemachus; ah—let not Him escape!
For end of this our task, while he survives,
None shall be found, such prudence he displays
And wisdom; neither are the people now

Unanimous our friends as heretofore.
Come, then—prevent him, ere he call the Greeks
To council; for he will not long delay,
But will be angry, doubtless, and will tell
Amid them all, how we in vain devised
His death, a deed which they will scarce applaud,
But will, perhaps, punish and drive us forth
From our own country to a distant land.—
Prevent him, therefore, quickly; in the field
Slay him, or on the road; so shall his wealth
And his possessions on ourselves devolve,
Which we will share equally, but his house
Shall be the Queen's, and his whom she shall wed.
Yet, if not so inclined, ye rather chuse
That he should live and occupy entire
His patrimony, then, no longer, here
Assembled, let us revel at his cost,
But let us all with spousal gifts produced
From our respective treasures, woo the Queen,
Leaving her in full freedom to espouse
Who proffers most, and whom the fates ordain.
He ceased; the assembly silent sat and mute.
Then rose Amphinomus amid them all,
Offspring renown'd of Nisus, son himself
Of King Aretias. He had thither led
The suitor train who from the pleasant isle
Corn-clad of green Dulichium had arrived,
And by his speech pleased far beyond them all
Penelope, for he was just and wise,
And thus, well-counselling the rest, began.
Not I, my friends! far be the thought from me

To slay Telemachus! it were a deed
Momentous, terrible, to slay a prince.
First, therefore, let us counsel ask of heaven,
And if Jove's oracle that course approve,
I will encourage you, and will myself
Be active in his death; but if the Gods
Forbid it, then, by my advice, forbear.
So spake Amphinomus, whom all approved.
Arising then, into Ulysses' house
They went, where each his splendid seat resumed.
A novel purpose occupied, meantime,
Penelope; she purposed to appear
Before her suitors, whose design to slay
Telemachus she had from Medon learn'd,
The herald, for his ear had caught the sound.
Toward the hall with her attendant train
She moved, and when, most graceful of her sex,
Where sat the suitors she arrived, between
The columns standing of the stately dome,
And covering with her white veil's lucid folds
Her features, to Antinoüs thus she spake.
Antinoüs, proud, contentious, evermore
To mischief prone! the people deem thee wise
Past thy compeers, and in all grace of speech
Preeminent, but such wast never thou.
Inhuman! why is it thy dark design
To slay Telemachus? and why with scorn
Rejectest thou the suppliant's[1] prayer, which Jove

[1] Alluding probably to entreaties made to him at some former time by herself and Telemachus, that he would not harm them. Clarke.

Himself hath witness'd? Plots please not the Gods.
Know'st not that thy own father refuge found
Here, when he fled before the people's wrath
Whom he had irritated by a wrong
Which, with a band of Taphian robbers join'd,
He offered to the Thesprots, our allies?
They would have torn his heart, and would have laid
All his delights and his possessions waste,
But my Ulysses slaked the furious heat
Of their revenge, whom thou requitest now
Wasting his goods, soliciting his wife,
Slaying his son, and filling me with woe.
But cease, I charge thee, and bid cease the rest.
  To whom the son of Polybus replied,
Eurymachus.—Icarius' daughter wise!
Take courage, fair Penelope, and chace
These fears unreasonable from thy mind!
The man lives not, nor shall, who while I live,
And faculty of sight retain, shall harm
Telemachus, thy son. For thus I say,
And thus will I perform; his blood shall stream
A sable current from my lance's point
That moment; for the city-waster Chief
Ulysses, oft, me placing on his knees,
Hath fill'd my infant grasp with savoury food,
And given me ruddy wine. I, therefore, hold
Telemachus of all men most my friend,
Nor hath he death to fear from hand of ours.
Yet, if the Gods shall doom him, die he must.
  So he encouraged her, who yet, himself,
Plotted his death. She, re-ascending, sought

Her stately chamber, and, arriving there,
Deplored with tears her long-regretted Lord
Till Athenæan Pallas azure-eyed
Dews of soft slumber o'er her lids diffused.
And now, at even-tide, Eumæus reach'd
Ulysses and his son. A yearling swine
Just slain they skilfully for food prepared,
When Pallas, drawing nigh, smote with her wand
Ulysses, at the stroke rendering him old,
And his apparel sordid as before,
Lest, knowing him, the swain at once should seek
Penelope, and let the secret forth.
Then foremost him Telemachus address'd.
Noble Eumæus! thou art come; what news
Bring'st from the city? Have the warrior band
Of suitors, hopeless of their ambush, reach'd
The port again, or wait they still for me?
To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
No time for such enquiry, nor to range,
Curious, the streets had I, but anxious wish'd
To make my message known, and to return.
But, as it chanced, a nimble herald sent
From thy companions, met me on the way,
Who reach'd thy mother first. Yet this I know,
For this I saw. Passing above the town
Where they have piled a way-side hill of stones
To Mercury, I beheld a gallant bark
Entering the port; a bark she was of ours,
The crew were numerous, and I mark'd her deep-
Laden with shields and spears of double edge.
Theirs I conjectured her, and could no more.

He spake, and, by Eumæus unperceived,
Telemachus his father eyed and smiled.
Their task accomplish'd, and the table spread,
They ate, nor any his due portion miss'd,
And hunger now and thirst both sated, all
To rest repair'd, and took the gift of sleep.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVII.

ARGUMENT OF THE SEVENTEENTH BOOK.

Telemachus returns to the city, and relates to his mother the principal passages of his voyage; Ulysses, conducted by Eumæus, arrives there also, and enters among the suitors, having been known only by his old dog Argus, who dies at his feet. The curiosity of Penelope being excited by the account which Eumæus gives her of Ulysses, she orders him immediately into her presence, but Ulysses postpones the interview till evening, when the suitors having left the palace, there shall be no danger of interruption. Eumæus returns to his cottage.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVII.

Now look'd Aurora from the East abroad,
When the illustrious offspring of divine
Ulysses bound his sandals to his feet;
He seized his sturdy spear match'd to his gripe,
And to the city meditating quick
Departure now, the swine-herd thus bespake.
  Father! I seek the city, to convince
My mother of my safe return, whose tears,
I judge, and lamentations shall not cease
Till her own eyes behold me. But I lay
On thee this charge. Into the city lead,
Thyself, this hapless guest, that he may beg
Provision there, a morsel and a drop
From such as may, perchance, vouchsafe the boon.
I cannot, vext and harrass'd as I am,
Feed all, and should the stranger take offence,
The worse for him. Plain truth is my delight.
  To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
Nor is it my desire to be detained.
Better the mendicant in cities seeks

His dole, vouchsafe it whosoever may,
Than in the villages. I am not young,
Nor longer of an age that well accords
With rural tasks, nor could I all perform
That it might please a master to command.
Go then, and when I shall have warm'd my limbs
Before the hearth, and when the risen sun
Shall somewhat chase the cold, thy servant's task
Shall be to guide me thither, as thou bidd'st.
For this is a vile garb; the frosty air
Of morning will benumb me thus attired,
And, as ye say, the city is remote.
He ended, and Telemachus in haste
Set forth, his thoughts all teeming as he went,
With dire revenge. Soon in the palace-courts
Arriving, he reclined his spear against
A column and proceeded to the hall.
Him Euryclea, first, his nurse perceived,
While on the variegated seats she spread
Their fleecy covering; swift with tearful eyes
She flew to him, and the whole female train
Of brave Ulysses swarm'd around his son,
Clasping him, and his forehead and his neck
Kissing affectionate; then came herself,
As golden Venus or Diana fair,
Forth from her chamber to her son's embrace,
The chaste Penelope; with tears she threw
Her arms around him, his bright-beaming eyes
And forehead kiss'd, and with a murmur'd plaint
Maternal in wing'd accents thus began.

Thou hast return'd, light of my eyes! my son!
My loved Telemachus! I had no hope
To see thee more when once thou hadst embark'd
For Pylus, privily, and with no consent
From me obtain'd, news seeking of thy sire.
But haste; unfold. Declare what thou hast seen.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Ah mother! let my sorrows rest, nor me
From death so lately 'scaped afflict anew,
But, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
With all the maidens of thy train ascend
To thy superior chamber, there to vow
A perfect hecatomb to all the Gods,
When Jove shall have avenged our numerous wrongs.
I seek the forum, there to introduce
A guest, my follower from the Pylian shore,
Whom sending forward with my noble band,
I bade Piræus to his own abode
Lead him, and with all kindness entertain
The stranger, till I should myself arrive.
He spake, nor flew his words useless away.
She, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
Vow'd a full hecatomb to all the Gods,
Would Jove but recompense her numerous wrongs.
Then, spear in hand, went forth her son, two dogs
Fleet-footed following him. O'er all his form
Pallas diffused a dignity divine,
And every eye gazed on him as he pass'd.
The suitors throng'd him round, joy on their lips
And welcome, but deep mischief in their hearts.

He, shunning all that crowd, chose to himself
A seat, where Mentor sat, and Antiphus,
And Halytherses, long his father's friends
Sincere, who of his voyage much enquired.
Then drew Piræus nigh, leading his guest
Toward the forum; nor Telemachus
Stood long aloof, but greeted his approach,
And was accosted by Piræus thus.
Sir! send thy menial women to bring home
The precious charge committed to my care,
Thy gifts at Menelaus' hands received.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Piræus! wait; for I not yet foresee
The upshot. Should these haughty ones effect
My death, clandestine, under my own roof,
And parcel my inheritance by lot,
I rather wish those treasures thine, than theirs.
But should I with success plan for them all
A bloody death, then, wing'd with joy, thyself
Bring home those presents to thy joyful friend.
So saying, he led the anxious stranger thence
Into the royal mansion, where arrived,
Each cast his mantle on a couch or throne,
And plunged his feet into a polish'd bath.
There wash'd and lubricated with smooth oils,
From the attendant maidens each received
Tunic and shaggy mantle. Thus attired,
Forth from the baths they stepp'd, and sat again.
A maiden, next, with golden ewer charged,
And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,

And spread the polish'd table, which with food
Of all kinds, remnants of the last regale,
The mistress of the household charge supplied.
Meantime, beside a column of the dome
His mother, on a couch reclining, twirl'd
Her slender threads. They to the furnish'd board
Stretch'd forth their hands, and hunger now and thirst
Both satisfied, Penelope began.

Telemachus! I will ascend again,
And will repose me on my woeful bed;
For such it hath been, and with tears of mine
Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
With Atreus' sons to Troy. For not a word
Thou would'st vouchsafe me till our haughty guests
Had occupied the house again, of all
That thou hast heard (if aught indeed thou hast,)
Of thy long-absent father's wish'd return.

Her answer'd then Telemachus discrete.
Mother! at thy request I will with truth
Relate the whole. At Pylus' shore arrived
We Nestor found, chief of the Pylian race.
Receiving me in his august abode,
He entertain'd me with such welcome kind
As a glad father shews to his own son
Long-lost and newly found; so Nestor me,
And his illustrious offspring, entertain'd,
But yet assured me that he nought had heard
From mortal lips of my magnanimous sire,
Whether alive or dead; with his own steeds
He sent me, and with splendid chariot thence

To spear-famed Menelaus, Atreus' son.
There saw I Helen, by the Gods' decree
Authoress of trouble both to Greece and Troy.
The Hero Menelaus then enquired
What cause had urged me to the pleasant vale
Of Lacedæmon; plainly I rehearsed
The occasion, and the Hero thus replied.
Ye Gods! they are ambitious of the bed
Of a brave man, however base themselves.
But, as it chances when the hart hath laid
Her fawns new-yean'd and sucklings yet, to rest
In some resistless lion's den, she roams
Meantime the hills, and in the grassy vales
Feeds heedless, but the lion to his lair
Returning soon, both her and hers destroys,
So shall thy father, brave Ulysses, them.
Jove! Pallas! and Apollo! oh that such
As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
With Philomelides, whom wrestling, flat
He threw, when all Achaia's sons rejoiced,
Ulysses now might mingle with his foes!
Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.
But thy inquiries neither indirect
Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
But all that from the Ancient[1] of the Deep
I have received will utter, hiding nought.
The God declared that he had seen thy sire
In a lone island, sorrowing, and detain'd

[1] Proteus.

An inmate in the grotto of the nymph
Calypso, wanting also means by which
To reach the country of his birth again,
For neither gallant barks nor friends had he
To speed his passage o'er the boundless waves.
So Menelaüs spake, the spear-renown'd.
My errand thus accomplish'd, I return'd,—
And by the Gods with gales propitious blest,
Was wafted swiftly to my native shore.
He spake, and tumult in his mother's heart
So speaking, raised. Consolatory, next,
The godlike Theoclymenus began.
Consort revered of Laertiades!
Little the Spartan knew, but list to me,
For I will plainly prophesy and sure.
Be Jove of all in heaven my witness first,
Then, this thy hospitable board, and, last,
The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, at whose hearth[2] I have arrived,
That, even now, within his native isle
Ulysses somewhere sits, or creeps obscure,
Witness of these enormities, and seeds
Sowing of dire destruction for his foes;
So sure an augury, while on the deck
Reclining of the gallant bark, I saw,
And with loud voice proclaim'd it to thy son.
Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Grant heaven, my guest, that this good word of thine

[2] The hearth was the altar on which the lares or household gods were worshipped.

Fail not! then shalt thou soon such bounty share
And friendship at my hands, that at first sight
Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.
Thus they conferr'd. Meantime the suitors hurl'd
The quoit and lance on the smooth area spread
Before Ulysses' gate, the custom'd scene
Of their contentions, sports, and clamours rude.
But when the hour of supper now approach'd,
And from the pastures on all sides the sheep
Came with their wonted drivers, Medon then
(For he of all the heralds pleased them most,
And waited at the board) them thus address'd.
Enough of play, young princes! entering now
The house, prepare we sedulous our feast,
Since in well-timed refreshment harm is none.
He spake, whose admonition pleased. At once
All rising sought the palace; there arrived,
Each cast his mantle off, which on his throne
Or couch he spread, then brisk to slaughter fell
Of many a victim; sheep and goats and brawns
They slew, all fatted, and a pastured ox,
Hastening the banquet; nor with less dispatch
Ulysses and Eumæus now prepared
To seek the town, when thus the swain began.
My guest! since thy fixt purpose is to seek
This day the city as my master bade,
Though I, in truth, much rather wish thee here
A keeper of our herds, yet through respect
And reverence of his orders, whose reproof
I dread, for masters seldom gently chide,

I would be gone. Arise, let us depart,
For day already is far-spent, and soon
The air of even-tide will chill thee more.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. Let us depart,
And lead, thyself, the way; but give me, first,
(If thou have one already hewn,) a staff
To lean on, for ye have described the road
Rugged, and oftimes dangerous to the foot.
So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
He cast, suspended by a leathern twist,
Eumæus gratified him with a staff,
And forth they went, leaving the cottage kept
By dogs and swains. He city-ward his King
Led on, in form a squalid beggar old,
Halting, and in unseemly garb attired.
But when, slow-travelling the craggy way,
They now approach'd the town, and had attain'd
The marble fountain deep, which with its streams
Pellucid all the citizens supplied,
(Ithacus had that fountain framed of old
With Neritus and Polyctor, over which
A grove of water-nourish'd alders hung
Circular on all sides, while cold the rill
Ran from the rock, on whose tall summit stood
The altar of the nymphs, by all who pass'd
With sacrifice frequented, still, and prayer;)
Melanthius, son of Dolius, at that fount
Met them; the chosen goats of every flock,

With two assistants, from the field he drove,
The suitors' supper. He, seeing them both,
In surly accent boorish, such as fired
Ulysses with resentment, thus began.
Ay—this is well—the villain leads the vile;—
Thus evermore the Gods join like to like.
Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither would'st conduct
This morsel-hunting mendicant obscene,
Defiler base of banquets? many a post
Shall he rub smooth that props him while he begs
Lean alms, sole object of his low pursuit,
Who ne'er to sword or tripod yet aspired.
Would'st thou afford him to me for a guard
Or sweeper of my stalls, or to supply
My kids with leaves, he should on bulkier thewes
Supported stand, though nourish'd but with whey.
But no such useful arts hath he acquired,
Nor likes he work, but rather much to extort
From others food for his unsated maw.
But mark my prophesy, for it is true,
At famed Ulysses' house should he arrive,
His sides shall shatter many a footstool hurl'd
Against them by the offended princes there.
He spake, and drawing nigh, with his raised foot,
Insolent as he was and brutish, smote
Ulysses' haunch, yet shook not from his path
The firm-set Chief, who doubtful mused awhile
Whether to rush on him, and with his staff
To slay him, or uplifting him on high,
Downward to dash him headlong; but his wrath

Restraining, calm he suffer'd the affront.
Him then Eumæus with indignant look
Rebuking, raised his hands, and fervent pray'd.
Nymphs of the fountains, progeny of Jove!
If e'er Ulysses on your altar burn'd
The thighs of fatted lambs or kidlings, grant
This my request. O let the Hero soon,
Conducted by some Deity, return!
So shall he quell that arrogance which safe
Thou now indulgest, roaming day by day
The city, while bad shepherds mar the flocks.
To whom the goat-herd answer thus return'd
Melanthius. Marvellous! how rare a speech
The subtle cur hath framed! whom I will send
Far hence at a convenient time on board
My bark, and sell him at no little gain.
I would, that he who bears the silver bow
As sure might pierce Telemachus this day
In his own house, or that the suitors might,
As that same wanderer shall return no more!
He said, and them left pacing slow along,
But soon, himself, at his Lord's house arrived;
There entering bold, he with the suitors sat
Opposite to Eurymachus, for him
He valued most. The sewers his portion placed
Of meat before him, and the maiden, chief
Directress of the household, gave him bread.
And now, Ulysses, with the swain his friend
Approach'd, when, hearing the harmonious lyre,
Both stood, for Phemius had begun his song.
He grasp'd the swine-herd's hand, and thus he said.

This house, Eumæus! of Ulysses seems
Passing magnificent, and to be known
With ease for his among a thousand more.
One pile supports another, and a wall
Crested with battlements surrounds the court;
Firm too the folding doors all force of man
Defy; but numerous guests, as I perceive,
Now feast within; witness the savoury steam
Fast-fuming upward, and the sounding harp,
Divine associate of the festive board.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Thou hast well guess'd; no wonder; thou art quick
On every theme; but let us well forecast
This business. Wilt thou, entering first thyself
The splendid mansion, with the suitors mix,
Me leaving here? or shall I lead the way
While thou remain'st behind? yet linger not,
Lest seeing thee without, some servant strike
Or drive thee hence. Consider which were best.
Him answer'd then the patient Hero bold.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. Lead thou the way
Me leaving here, for neither stripes nor blows
To me are strange. Much exercised with pain
In fight and on the Deep, I have long since
Learn'd patience. Follow next what follow may!
But to suppress the appetite, I deem
Impossible; the stomach is a source
Of ills to man, an avaricious gulf
Destructive, which to satiate, ships are rigg'd,
Seas traversed, and fierce battles waged remote.

Thus they discoursing stood; Argus the while,
Ulysses' dog, uplifted where he lay
His head and ears erect. Ulysses him
Had bred long since himself, but rarely used,
Departing first to Ilium. Him the youths
In other days led frequent to the chace
Of wild goat, hart, and hare; but now he lodged
A poor old cast-off, of his Lord forlorn,
Where mules and oxen had before the gate
Much ordure left, with which Ulysses' hinds
Should, in due time, manure his spacious fields.
There lay, with dog-devouring vermin foul
All over, Argus; soon as he perceived
Long-lost Ulysses nigh, down fell his ears
Clapp'd close, and with his tail glad sign he gave
Of gratulation, impotent to rise
And to approach his master as of old.
Ulysses, noting him, wiped off a tear
Unmark'd, and of Eumæus quick enquired.
I can but wonder seeing such a dog
Thus lodged, Eumæus! beautiful in form
He is, past doubt, but whether he hath been
As fleet as fair I know not; rather such
Perchance as masters sometimes keep to grace
Their tables, nourish'd more for show than use.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
He is the dog of one dead far remote.
But had he now such feat-performing strength
As when Ulysses left him going hence
To Ilium, in one moment thou shouldst mark,

Astonish'd his agility and force.
He never in the sylvan deep recess
The wild beast saw that 'scaped him, and he track'd
Their steps infallible; but he hath now
No comfort, for (the master dead afar,)
The heedless servants care not for his dog.
Domestics, missing once their Lord's controul,
Grow wilful, and refuse their proper tasks;
For whom Jove dooms to servitude, he takes
At once the half of that man's worth away.
He said, and, entering at the portal, join'd
The suitors. Then his destiny released
Old Argus, soon as he had lived to see
Ulysses in the twentieth year restored.
Godlike Telemachus, long ere the rest,
Marking the swine-herd's entrance, with a nod
Summon'd him to approach. Eumæus cast
His eye around, and seeing vacant there
The seat which the dispenser of the feast
Was wont to occupy while he supplied
The numerous guests, planted it right before
Telemachus, and at his table sat,
On which the herald placed for him his share
Of meat, and from the baskets gave him bread.
Soon after *him*, Ulysses enter'd slow
The palace, like a squalid beggar old,
Staff-propp'd, and in loose tatters foul attired.
Within the portal on the ashen sill
He sat, and seeming languid, lean'd against
A cypress pillar by the builder's art

Polish'd long since, and planted at the door.
Then took Telemachus a loaf entire
Forth from the elegant basket, and of flesh
A portion large as his two hands contain'd,
And beck'ning close the swine-herd, charged him thus.
These to the stranger; whom advise to ask
Some dole from every suitor; bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.
He spake; Eumæus went, and where he sat
Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.
Telemachus, oh stranger, sends thee these,
And counsels thee to importune for more
The suitors, one by one; for bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Jove, King of all, grant every good on earth
To kind Telemachus, and the complete
Accomplishment of all that he desires!
He said, and with both hands outspread, the mess
Receiving as he sat, on his worn bag
Disposed it at his feet. Long as the bard
Chaunted, he ate, and when he ceased to eat,
Then also ceased the bard divine to sing.
And now ensued loud clamour in the hall
And tumult, when Minerva, drawing nigh
To Laertiades, impell'd the Chief
Crusts to collect, or any pittance small
At every suitor's hand, for trial's sake
Of just and unjust; yet deliverance none
From evil she design'd for any there.

From left to right[3] his progress he began.
Petitioning, with outstretch'd hands, the throng,
As one familiar with the beggar's art.
They pitying gave to him, but view'd him still
With wonder, and enquiries mutual made
Who, and whence was he? Then the goat-herd rose
Melanthius, and the assembly thus address'd.
  Hear me, ye suitors of the illustrious Queen!
This guest, of whom ye ask, I have beheld
Elsewhere; the swine-herd brought him; but himself
I know not, neither who nor whence he is.
  So he; then thus Antinoüs stern rebuked
The swine-herd. Ah, notorious as thou art,
Why hast thou shewn this vagabond the way
Into the city? are we not enough
Infested with these troublers of our feasts?
Deem'st it a trifle that such numbers eat
At thy Lord's cost, and hast thou, therefore, led
This fellow hither, found we know not where?
  To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Antinoüs! though of high degree, thou speak'st
Not wisely. What man to another's house
Repairs to invite him to a feast, unless
He be of those who by profession serve
The public, prophet, healer of disease,
Ingenious artist, or some bard divine
Whose music may exhilarate the guests?
These, and such only, are in every land

[3] That he might begin auspiciously. Wine was served in the same direction. F.

Call'd to the banquet; none invites the poor,
Who much consume, and no requital yield.
But thou of all the suitors roughly treat'st
Ulysses' servants most, and chiefly me;
Yet thee I heed not, while the virtuous Queen
Dwells in this palace, and her godlike son.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Peace! answer not verbose a man like him.
Antinoüs hath a tongue accustom'd much
To tauntings, and promotes them in the rest.
Then, turning to Antinoüs, quick he said—
Antinoüs! as a father for his son
Takes thought, so thou for me, who bidd'st me chase
The stranger harshly hence; but God[4] forbid!
Impart to him. I grudge not, but myself
Exhort thee to it; neither, in this cause,
Fear thou the Queen, or in the least regard
Whatever menial throughout all the house
Of famed Ulysses. Ah! within thy breast
Dwells no such thought; thou lovest not to impart
To others, but to gratify thyself.
To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd.
High-soaring and intemperate in thy speech
How hast thou said, Telemachus? Would all
As much bestow on him, he should not seek
Admittance here again three months to come.
So saying, he seized the stool which, banquetting,
He press'd with his nice feet, and from beneath

[4] Here again Θεὸς occurs in the abstract.

The table forth advanced it into view.
The rest all gave to him, with bread and flesh
Filling his wallet, and Ulysses, now,
Returning to his threshold, there to taste
The bounty of the Greeks, paused in his way
Beside Antinoüs, whom he thus address'd.
  Kind sir, vouchsafe to me! for thou appear'st
Not least, but greatest of the Achaians here,
And hast a kingly look. It might become
Thee therefore above others to bestow,
So should I praise thee wheresoe'er I roam.
I also lived the happy owner once
Of such a stately mansion, and have given
To numerous wanderers (whencesoe'er they came)
All that they needed; I was also served
By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
The envied owner opulent and blest.
But Jove (for so it pleased him) hath reduced
My all to nothing, prompting me, in league
With rovers of the Deep, to sail afar
To Ægypt, for my sure destruction there.
Within the Ægyptian stream my barks well oar'd
I station'd, and, enjoining strict my friends
To watch them close-attendant at their side,
Commanded spies into the hill-tops; but they,
Under the impulse of a spirit rash
And hot for quarrel, the well-cultured fields
Pillaged of the Ægyptians, captive led
Their wives and little-ones, and slew the men.
Ere long, the loud alarm their city reach'd.

Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
With horse and foot and with the gleam of arms
Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
Struck all my people; none found courage more
To stand, for mischiefs swarm'd on every side.
There, numerous by the glittering spear we fell
Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
Alive to servitude; but me they gave
To Dmetor, King in Cyprus, Jasus' son;
He entertain'd me liberally, and thence
This land I reach'd, but poor and woe-begone.
  Then answer thus Antinoüs harsh return'd.
What dæmon introduced this nuisance here,
This troubler of our feast? stand yonder, keep
Due distance from my table, or expect
To see an Ægypt and a Cyprus worse
Than those, bold mendicant and void of shame!
Thou hauntest each, and inconsiderate each
Gives to thee, because gifts at others cost
Are cheap, and, plentifully served themselves,
They squander, heedless, viands not their own.
  To whom Ulysses while he slow retired.
Gods! how illiberal with that specious form!
Thou wouldst not grant the poor a grain of salt
From thy own board, who at another's fed
So nobly, canst not spare a crust to me.
  He spake; then raged Antinoüs still the more,
And in wing'd accents, louring, thus replied.
  Take such dismission now as thou deservest,
Opprobrious! hast thou dared to scoff at me?

So saying, he seized his stool, and on the joint
Of his right shoulder smote him; firm as rock
He stood, by no such force to be displaced,
But silent shook his brows, and dreadful deeds
Of vengeance ruminating, sought again
His seat the threshold, where his bag full-charged
He grounded, and the suitors thus address'd.
Hear now, ye suitors of the matchless Queen,
My bosom's dictates. Trivial is the harm,
Scarce felt, if, fighting for his own, his sheep
Perchance, or beeves, a man receive a blow.
But me Antinoüs struck for that I ask'd
Food from him merely to appease the pangs
Of hunger, source of numerous ills to man.
If then the poor man have a God to avenge
His wrongs, I pray to him that death may seize
Antinoüs, ere his nuptial hour arrive!
To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd,
Son of Eupithes. Either seated there
Or going hence, eat, stranger, and be still;
Lest for thy insolence, by hand or foot
We drag thee forth, and thou be flay'd alive.
He ceased, whom all indignant heard, and thus
Even his own proud companions censured him.
Antinoüs! thou didst not well to smite
The wretched vagabond. O thou art doom'd
For ever, if there be a God in heaven[5];

[5] Ει δη πθ τις επουρανιος θεος εστι.
Eustathius, and Clarke after him, understand an aposiopesis here, as if the speaker meant to say—what if there should be?

For in similitude of strangers oft,
The Gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
Repair to populous cities, where they mark
The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.
So they, for whose reproof he little cared.
But in his heart Telemachus that blow
Resented, anguish-torn, yet not a tear
He shed, but silent shook his brows, and mused
Terrible things. Penelope, meantime,
Told of the wanderer so abused beneath
Her roof, among her maidens thus exclaim'd.
So may Apollo, glorious archer, smite
Thee also! Then Eurynome replied,
Oh might our prayers prevail, none of them all
Should see bright-charioted Aurora more.
Her answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Nurse! they are odious all, for that alike
All teem with mischief! but Antinoüs' looks
Remind me ever of the gloom of death.
A stranger hath arrived who, begging, roams
The house, (for so his penury enjoins)
The rest have given him, and have fill'd his bag
With viands, but Antinoüs hath bruised
His shoulder with a foot-stool hurl'd at him.
While thus the Queen conversing with her train
In her own chamber sat, Ulysses made

or—suppose there should be? But the sentence seems to fall in better with what follows interpreted as above, and it is a sense of the passage not unwarranted by the opinion of other commentators.—See Schaufelbergerus.

Plenteous repast. Then calling to her side
Eumæus, thus she signified her will.
Eumæus, noble friend! bid now approach
Yon stranger. I would speak with him, and ask
If he have seen Ulysses, or have heard
Tidings, perchance, of the afflicted Chief,
For much a wanderer by his garb he seems.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Were those Achaians silent, thou should'st hear,
O Queen! a tale that would console thy heart.
Three nights I housed him, and within my cot
Three days detain'd him, (for his ship he left
A fugitive, and came direct to me,)
But half untold his history still remains.
As when his eye one fixes on a bard
From heaven instructed in such themes as charm
The ear of mortals, ever as he sings
The people press insatiable to hear,
So, in my cottage, seated at my side,
That stranger with his tale enchanted me.
Laertes, he affirms, hath been his guest
Erewhile in Crete, where Minos' race resides.
And thence he hath arrived, after great loss,
A suppliant to the very earth abased;
He adds, that in Thesprotia's neighbour realm
He of Ulysses heard, both that he lives,
And that he comes laden with riches home.
To whom Penelope, discrete, replied.
Haste; call him. I would hear myself his tale.
Meantime, let these, or in the palace gate

Sport jocular, or here; their hearts are light,
For their possessions are secure; *their* wine
None drinks, or eats *their* viands, save their own;
While my abode, day after day, themselves
Haunting, my beeves and sheep, and fatted goats
Slay for the banquet, and my casks exhaust
Extravagant, whence endless waste ensues;
For no such friend as was Ulysses once
Have I to expel the mischief. But might he
Revisit once his native shores again,
Then, aided by his son, he should avenge,
Incontinent, the wrongs which now I mourn.
  Then sneezed Telemachus with sudden force,
That all the palace rang; his mother laugh'd,
And in wing'd accents thus the swain bespake.
  Haste—bid him hither—heard'st thou not the sneeze
Propitious of my son? oh might it prove
A presage of inevitable death
To all these revellers! may none escape!
Now mark me well. Should the event his tale
Confirm, at my own hands he shall receive
Mantle and tunic both for his reward.
  She spake; he went, and where Ulysses sat
Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.
  Penelope, my venerable friend!
Calls thee, the mother of Telemachus.
Oppress'd by numerous troubles, she desires
To ask thee tidings of her absent Lord.
And should the event verify thy report,
Thy meed shall be (a boon which much thou need'st)

Tunic and mantle; but she gives no more;
Thy sustenance[6] thou must, as now, obtain,
Begging it at their hands who chuse to give.
Then thus Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
Eumæus! readily I can relate
Truth, and truth only, to the prudent Queen
Icarius' daughter; for of him I know
Much, and have suffer'd sorrows like his own.
But dread I feel of this imperious throng
Perverse, whose riot and outrageous acts
Of violence echo through the vault of heaven.
And even now, when for no fault of mine
Yon suitor struck me as I pass'd, and fill'd
My flesh with pain, neither Telemachus
Nor any interposed to stay his arm.
Now, therefore, let Penelope, although
Impatient, till the sun descend postpone
Her questions; then she may enquire secure
When comes her husband, and may nearer place
My seat to the hearth-side, for thinly clad
Thou know'st I am, whose aid I first implored.
He ceased; at whose reply Eumæus sought
Again the queen, but ere he yet had pass'd
The threshold, thus she greeted his return.
Comest thou alone, Eumæus? why delays
The invited wanderer? dreads he other harm?
Or sees he aught that with a bashful awe
Fills him? the bashful poor are poor indeed.

[6] This seems added by Eumæus to cut off from Ulysses the hope that might otherwise tempt him to use fiction.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
He hath well spoken; none who would decline
The rudeness of this contumelious throng
Could answer otherwise; thee he entreats
To wait till sun-set, and that course, O Queen,
Thou shalt thyself far more commodious find,
To hold thy conference with the guest, alone.
Then answer thus Penelope return'd.
The stranger, I perceive, is not unwise,
Whoe'er he be, for on the earth are none
Proud, insolent, and profligate as these.
So spake the Queen. Then (all his message told)
The good Eumæus to the suitors went
Again, and with his head inclined toward
Telemachus, lest others should his words
Witness, in accents wing'd him thus address'd.
Friend and kind master! I return to keep
My herds, and to attend my rural charge,
Whence we are both sustain'd. Keep thou, meantime,
All here with vigilance, but chiefly watch
For thy own good, and save *thyself* from harm;
For numerous here brood mischief, whom the Gods
Exterminate, ere yet their plots prevail!
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
So be it, father! and (thy evening-mess
Eaten) depart; to-morrow come again,
Bringing fair victims hither; I will keep,
I and the Gods, meantime, all here secure.
He ended; then resumed once more the swain
His polish'd seat, and both with wine and food

Now satiate, to his charge return'd, the court
Leaving and all the palace throng'd with guests;
They (for it now was evening) all alike
Turn'd jovial to the song and to the dance.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVIII.

ARGUMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH BOOK.

The beggar Irus arrives at the palace; a combat takes place between him and Ulysses, in which Irus is by one blow vanquished. Penelope appears to the suitors, and having reminded them of the presents which she had a right to expect from them, receives a gift from each. Eurymachus, provoked by a speech of Ulysses, flings a footstool at him, which knocks down the cup-bearer; a general tumult is the consequence, which continues until by the advice of Telemachus, seconded by Amphinomus, the suitors retire to their respective homes.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVIII.

Now came a public mendicant, a man
Accustom'd, seeking alms, to roam the streets
Of Ithaca; one never sated yet
With food or drink; yet muscle had he none,
Or strength of limb, though giant-built in show.
Arnæus was the name which at his birth
His mother gave him, but the youthful band
Of suitors, whom as messenger he served,
All named him Irus. He, arriving, sought
To drive Ulysses forth from his own home,
And in rough accents rude him thus rebuked.
  Forth from the porch, old man! lest by the foot
I drag thee quickly forth. Seest not how all
Wink on me, and by signs give me command
To drag thee hence? nor is it aught but shame
That checks me. Yet arise, lest soon with fists
Thou force me to adjust our difference.
  To whom Ulysses, louring dark, replied.
Peace, fellow! neither word nor deed of mine
Wrongs thee, nor feel I envy at the boon,

However plentiful, which thou receivest.
The sill may hold us both; thou dost not well
To envy others; thou appear'st like me
A vagrant; plenty is the gift of heaven.
But urge me not to trial of our fists,
Lest thou provoke me, and I stain with blood
Thy bosom and thy lips, old as I am.
So, my attendance should to-morrow prove
More tranquil here; for thou should'st leave, I judge,
Ulysses' mansion, never to return.
Then answer'd Irus, kindling with disdain.
Gods! with what volubility of speech
The table-hunter prates, like an old hag
Collied with chimney-smutch! but ah beware!
For I intend thee mischief, and to dash
With both hands every grinder from thy gums,
As men untooth a pig pilfering the corn.
Come—gird thee, that all here may view the strife—
But how wilt thou oppose one young as I?
Thus on the threshold of the lofty gate
They, wrangling, chafed each other, whose dispute
The high-born youth Antinoüs mark'd; he laugh'd
Delighted, and the suitors thus address'd.
Oh friends! no pastime ever yet occurr'd
Pleasant as this which, now, the Gods themselves
Afford us. Irus and the stranger brawl
As they would box. Haste—let us urge them on.
He said; at once loud-laughing all arose;
The ill-clad disputants they round about
Encompass'd, and Antinoüs thus began.

Attend, ye noble suitors, to my voice.
Two paunches lie of goats here on the fire,
Which fill'd with fat and blood we set apart
For supper; he who conquers, and in force
Superior proves, shall freely take the paunch
Which he prefers, and shall with us thenceforth
Feast always; neither will we here admit
Poor man beside to beg at our repasts.
He spake, whom all approved; next, artful Chief
Ulysses thus, dissembling, them address'd.
Princes! unequal is the strife between
A young man and an old with misery worn;
But hunger, always counsellor of ill,
Me moves to fight, that many a bruise received,
I may be foil'd at last. Now swear ye all
A solemn oath, that none, for Irus' sake
Shall, interposing, smite me with his fist
Clandestine, forcing me to yield the prize.
He ceased, and, as he bade, all present swore
A solemn oath; then thus, amid them all
Standing, Telemachus majestic spake.
Guest! if thy courage and thy manly mind
Prompt thee to banish this man hence, no force
Fear thou beside, for who smites thee, shall find
Yet other foes to cope with; I am here
In the host's office, and the royal Chiefs
Eurymachus and Antinoüs, alike
Discrete, accord unanimous with me.
He ceased, whom all approved. Then, with his rags
Ulysses braced for decency his loins

Around, but gave to view his brawny thighs
Proportion'd fair, and stripp'd his shoulders broad,
His chest and arms robust; while, at his side,
Dilating more the Hero's limbs and more
Minerva stood; the assembly with fixt eyes
Astonish'd gazed on him, and looking full
On his next friend, a suitor thus remark'd.
Irus shall be in Irus found no more.
He hath pull'd evil on himself. What thewes
And what a haunch the senior's tatters hid!
So he,—meantime in Irus' heart arose
Horrible tumult; yet, his loins by force
Girding, the servants dragg'd him to the fight
Pale, and his flesh all quivering as he came;
Whose terrors thus Antinoüs sharp rebuked.
Now, wherefore livest, and why wast ever born
Thou mountain-mass of earth! if such dismay
Shake thee at thought of combat with a man
Ancient as he, and worn with many woes?
But mark, I threaten not in vain; should he
O'ercome thee, and in force superior prove,
To Echetus thou goest; my sable bark
Shall waft thee to Epirus, where he reigns
Enemy of mankind; of nose and ears
He shall despoil thee with his ruthless steel,
[1] And tearing by the roots the parts away
That mark thy sex, shall cast them to the dogs.

[1] Tradition says that Echetus, for a love-affair, condemned his daughter to lose her eyes, and to grind iron barley-grains, while her lover was doomed to suffer what Antinoüs threatens to Irus. F.

He said; *His* limbs new terrors at that sound
Shook under him; into the middle space
They led him, and each raised his hands on high.
Then doubtful stood Ulysses toil-inured,
Whether to strike him lifeless to the earth
At once, or fell him with a managed blow.
To smite with managed force at length he chose
As wisest, lest, betray'd by his own strength,
He should be known. With elevated fists
Both stood; him Irus on the shoulder struck,
But he his adversary on the neck
Pash'd close beneath his ear; he split the bones,
And blood in sable streams ran from his mouth.
With many an hideous yell he dropp'd, his teeth
Chatter'd, and with his heels he drumm'd the ground.
The wooers, at that sight, lifting their hands
In glad surprise, laugh'd all their breath away.
Then, through the vestibule, and right across
The court, Ulysses dragg'd him by the foot
Into the portico, where propping him
Against the wall, and giving him his staff,
In accents wing'd he bade him thus farewell.
There seated now, dogs drive and swine away,
Nor claim (thyself so base) supreme control
O'er other guests and mendicants, lest harm
Reach thee, hereafter, heavier still than this.
So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
He threw suspended by its leathern twist,
And toward the threshold turning, sat again.

They laughing ceaseless still, the palace-door
Re-enter'd, and him, courteous, thus bespake.
  Jove, and all Jove's assessors in the skies
Vouchsafe thee, stranger, whatsoe'er it be,
Thy heart's desire! who hast our ears relieved
From that insatiate beggar's irksome tone.
Soon to Epirus he shall go, dispatch'd
To Echetus the King, pest of mankind.
  So they; to whose propitious words the Chief
Listen'd delighted. Then Antinoüs placed
The paunch before him, and Amphinomus
Two loaves, selected from the rest; he fill'd
A goblet also, drank to him, and said,
  My father, hail! O stranger, be thy lot
Hereafter blest, though adverse now and hard!
  To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
To me, Amphinomus, endued thou seem'st
With much discretion, who art also son
Of such a sire, whose fair report I know,
Dulichian Nysus opulent and good.
Fame speaks thee his, and thou appear'st a man
Judicious; hear me, therefore; mark me well.
Earth nourishes, of all that breathe or creep,
No creature weak as man; for while the Gods
Grant him prosperity and health, no fear
Hath he, or thought, that he shall ever mourn;
But when the Gods with evils unforeseen
Smite him, he bears them with a grudging mind;
For such as the complexion of his lot

By the appointment of the Sire of all,
Such is the colour of the mind of man.
I, too, have been familiar in my day
With wealth and ease, but I was then self-will'd,
And many wrong'd, embolden'd by the thought
Of my own father's and my brethren's power.
Let no man, therefore, be unjust, but each
Use modestly what gift soe'er of heaven.
So do not these. These ever bent I see
On deeds injurious, the possessions large
Consuming, and dishonouring the wife
Of one, who will not, as I judge, remain
Long absent from his home, but is, perchance,
Even at the door. Thee, therefore, may the Gods
Steal hence in time; ah, meet not his return
To his own country! for they will not part,
(He and the suitors) without blood, I think,
If once he enter at these gates again!
He ended, and libation pouring, quaff'd
The generous juice, then in the prince's hand
Replaced the cup; he, pensive, and his head
Inclining low, pass'd from him; for his heart
Foreboded ill; yet 'scaped not even he,
But in the snare of Pallas caught, his life
To the heroic arm and spear resign'd
Of brave Telemachus. Reaching, at length,
The seat whence he had risen, he sat again.
Minerva then, Goddess cœrulean-eyed,
Prompted Icarius' daughter to appear
Before the suitors; so to expose the more

Their drift iniquitous, and that herself
More bright than ever in her husband's eyes
Might shine, and in her son's. Much mirth she feign'd[2],
And bursting into laughter, thus began.
I wish, Eurynome! (who never felt
That wish till now) though I detest them all,
To appear before the suitors, in whose ears
I will admonish, for his good, my son,
Not to associate with that lawless crew
Too much, who speak him fair, but foul intend.
Then answer thus Eurynome return'd.
My daughter! wisely hast thou said and well.
Go! bathe thee and anoint thy face, then give
To thy dear son such counsel as thou wilt
Without reserve; but show not there thy cheeks
Sullied with tears, for profit none accrues
From grief like thine, that never knows a change.
And he is now bearded, and hath attain'd
That age which thou wast wont with warmest prayer
To implore the Gods that he might live to see.
Her answer'd, then, Penelope discrete.
Persuade not me, though studious of my good,
To bathe, Eurynome! or to anoint
My face with oil; for all my charms the Gods
Inhabitants of Olympus then destroy'd
When he, embarking, left me. Go, command
Hippodamia and Autonöe
That they attend me to the hall, and wait

[2] This seems the sort of laughter intended by the word Αχρειον.

Beside me there; for decency forbids
That I should enter to the men, alone.
She ceased, and through the house the ancient dame
Hasted to summon whom she had enjoin'd.
But Pallas, Goddess of the azure eyes,
Diffused, meantime, the kindly dew of sleep
Around Icarius' daughter; on her couch
Reclining, soon as she reclined, she dozed,
And yielded to soft slumber all her frame.
Then, that the suitors might admire her more,
The glorious Goddess cloathed her, as she lay,
With beauty of the skies; her lovely face
She with ambrosia purified, with such
As Cytherea chaplet-crown'd employs
Herself, when in the eye-ensnaring dance
She joins the Graces; to a statelier height
Beneath her touch, an ampler size she grew,
And fairer than the elephantine bone
Fresh from the carver's hand. These gifts conferr'd
Divine, the awful Deity retired.
And now, loud-prattling as they came, arrived
Her handmaids; sleep forsook her at the sound,
She wiped away a tear, and thus she said.
Me gentle sleep, sad mourner as I am,
Hath here involved. O would that by a death
As gentle chaste Diana would herself
This moment set me free, that I might waste
My life no longer in heart-felt regret
Of a lamented husband's various worth
And virtue, for in Greece no Peer had he!

She said, and through her chambers' stately door
Issuing, descended; neither went she sole,
But with those two fair menials of her train.
Arriving, most majestic of her sex,
In presence of the numerous guests, beneath
The portal of the stately dome she stood
Between her maidens, with her lucid veil
Mantling her lovely cheeks. Then, every knee
Trembled, and every heart with amorous heat
Dissolved, her charms all coveting alike,
While to Telemachus her son she spake.
Telemachus! thou art no longer wise
As once thou wast, and even when a child.
For thriven as thou art, and at full size
Arrived of man, so fair-proportion'd too,
That even a stranger, looking on thy growth
And beauty, would pronounce thee nobly born,
Yet is thy intellect still immature.
For what is this? why suffer'st thou a guest
To be abused in thy own palace? how?
Know'st not that if the stranger seated here
Endure vexation, the disgrace is thine?
Her answer'd then Telemachus discrete.
I blame thee not, my mother, that thou feel'st
Thine anger moved; yet want I not a mind
Able to mark and to discern between
Evil and good, child as I lately was,
Although I find not promptitude of thought
Sufficient always, overawed and check'd
By such a multitude, all bent alike

On mischief, of whom none takes part with me.
But Irus and the stranger have not fought,
Urged by the suitors, and the stranger proved
Victorious; yes—Heaven knows how much I wish
That, (in the palace some, some in the court,)
The suitors all sat vanquish'd, with their heads
Depending low, and with enfeebled limbs,
Even as that same Irus, while I speak,
With chin on bosom propp'd at the hall-gate
Sits drunkard-like, incapable to stand
Erect, or to regain his proper home.
So they; and now addressing to the Queen
His speech, Eurymachus thus interposed.
O daughter of Icarius! could all eyes
Throughout Iäsian[3] Argos view thy charms,
Discrete Penelope! more suitors still
Assembling in thy courts would banquet here
From morn to eve; for thou surpassest far
In beauty, stature, worth, all womankind.
To whom replied Penelope discrete.
The Gods, Eurymachus! reduced to nought
My virtue, beauty, stature, when the Greeks,
Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.
Could he, returning, my domestic charge
Himself intend, far better would my fame
Be so secured, and wider far diffused.
But I am wretched now, such storms the Gods
Of woe have sent me. When he left his home,
Clasping my wrist with his right hand, he said.

[3] From Iäsus, once King of Peloponnesus.

My love! for I imagine not that all
The warrior Greeks shall safe from Troy return,
Since fame reports the Trojans brave in fight,
Skill'd in the spear, mighty to draw the bow,
And nimble vaulters to the backs of steeds
High-mettled, which to speediest issue bring
The dreadful struggle of all-wasting war,—
I know not, therefore, whether Heaven intend
My safe return, or I must perish there.
But manage thou at home. Cherish, as now,
While I am absent, or more dearly still
My parents, and what time our son thou seest
Mature, then wed; wed even whom thou wilt,
And hence to a new home.—Such were his words,
All which shall full accomplishment ere long
Receive. The day is near, when hapless I,
Lost to all comfort by the will of Jove,
Must meet the nuptials that my soul abhors.
But this thought now afflicts me, and my mind
Continual haunts. Such was not heretofore
The suitors custom'd practice; all who chose
To engage in competition for a wife
Well-qualitied and well-endow'd, produced
From their own herds and fatted flocks a feast
For the bride's friends, and splendid presents made,
But never ate as ye, at others' cost.

She ceased; then brave Ulysses toil-inured
Rejoiced that, soothing them, she sought to draw
From each some gift, although on other views,
And more important far, himself intent.

Then thus Antinoüs, Eupithes' son.
Icarius' daughter wise! only accept
Such gifts as we shall bring, for gifts demand
That grace, nor can be decently refused;
But to our rural labours, or elsewhere
Depart not we, till first thy choice be made
Of the Achaian, chief in thy esteem.
Antinoüs spake, whose answer all approved.
Then each dispatch'd his herald who should bring
His master's gift. Antinoüs' herald, first,
A mantle of surpassing beauty brought,
Wide, various, with no fewer clasps adorn'd
Than twelve, all golden, and to every clasp
Was fitted opposite its eye exact.
Next, to Eurymachus his herald bore
A necklace of wrought gold, with amber rich
Bestudded, every bead bright as a sun.
Two servants for Eurydamas produced
Ear-pendants fashion'd with laborious art,
Broad, triple-gemm'd, of brilliant light profuse.
The herald of Polyctor's son, the prince
Pisander, brought a collar to his Lord,
A sumptuous ornament. Each Greecian gave,
And each a gift dissimilar from all.
Then, loveliest of her sex, turning away,
She sought her chamber, whom her maidens fair
Attended, charged with those illustrious gifts.
Then turn'd they all to dance and pleasant song
Joyous, expecting the approach of even.
Ere long the dusky evening came, and them

Found sporting still. Then, placing in the hall
Three hearths, that should illumine wide the house,
They compass'd them around with fuel-wood
Long-season'd and new-split, mingling the sticks
With torches. The attendant women watch'd
And fed those fires by turns, to whom, himself,
Their unknown Sovereign thus his speech address'd.
Ye maidens of the long-regretted Chief
Ulysses! to the inner courts retire,
And to your virtuous Queen, that following there
Your several tasks, spinning and combing wool,
Ye may amuse her; I, meantime, for these
Will furnish light, and should they chuse to stay
Till golden morn appear, they shall not tire
My patience aught, for I can much endure.
He said; they tittering on each other gazed.
But one, Melantho with the blooming cheeks,
Rebuked him rudely. Dolius was her sire,
But by Penelope she had been rear'd
With care maternal, and in infant years
Supplied with many a toy; yet even she
Felt not her mistress' sorrows in her heart,
But of Eurymachus enamour'd, oft
His lewd embraces met; she, with sharp speech
Reproachful, to Ulysses thus replied.
Why, what a brainsick vagabond art thou!
Who neither wilt to the smith's forge retire
For sleep, nor to the public portico,
But here remaining, with audacious prate
Disturb'st this numerous company, restrain'd

By no respect or fear; either thou art
With wine intoxicated, or perchance,
Art always fool, and therefore babblest now.
Say, art thou drunk with joy that thou hast foil'd
The beggar Irus? Tremble, lest a man
Stronger than Irus suddenly arise,
Who on thy temples pelting thee with blows
Far heavier than his, shall drive thee hence
With many a bruise, and foul with thy own blood.
To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.
Snarler! Telemachus shall be inform'd
This moment of thy eloquent harangue,
That he may hew thee for it, limb from limb.
So saying, he scared the women; back they flew
Into the house, but each with faltering knees
Through dread, for they believed his threats sincere.
He then illumined by the triple blaze,
Watch'd close the lights, busy from hearth to hearth,
But in his soul, meantime, far other thoughts
Revolved, tremendous, not conceived in vain.
Nor Pallas (that they might exasperate more
Laertes' son) permitted to abstain
From heart-corroding bitterness of speech
Those suitors proud, of whom Eurymachus,
Offspring of Polybus, while thus he jeer'd
Ulysses, set the others in a roar.
Hear me, ye suitors of the illustrious Queen!
I shall promulge my thought. This man, methinks,
Not unconducted by the Gods, hath reach'd
Ulysses' mansion, for to me the light

Of yonder torches altogether seems
His own, an emanation from his head,
Which not the smallest growth of hair obscures.
He ended; and the city-waster Chief
Himself accosted next. Art thou disposed
To serve me, friend! would I afford thee hire,
A labourer at my farm? thou shalt not want
Sufficient wages; thou may'st there collect
Stones for my fences, and may'st plant my oaks,
For which I would supply thee all the year
With food, and cloaths, and sandals for thy feet.
But thou hast learn'd less creditable arts,
Nor hast a will to work, preferring much
By beggary from others to extort
Wherewith to feed thy never-sated maw.
Then answer, thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
Forbear, Eurymachus; for were we match'd
In work against each other, thou and I,
Mowing in spring-time, when the days are long,
I with my well-bent sickle in my hand,
Thou arm'd with one as keen, for trial sake
Of our ability to toil unfed
Till night, grass still sufficing for the proof;
Or if, again, it were our task to drive
Yoked oxen of the noblest breed, sleek-hair'd,
Big-limb'd, both batten'd to the full with grass,
Their age and aptitude for work the same,
Not soon to be fatigued, and were the field
In size four acres, with a glebe through which
The share might smoothly slide, then should'st thou see

How straight my furrow should be cut and true.
Or should Saturnian Jove this day excite
Here, battle, or elsewhere, and were I arm'd
With two bright spears and with a shield, and bore
A brazen casque well-fitted to my brows,
Me then thou should'st perceive mingling in fight
Amid the foremost Chiefs, nor with the crime
Of idle beggary should'st upbraid me more.
But thou art much a railer, one whose heart
Pity moves not, and seem'st a mighty man
And valiant to thyself, only because
Thou herd'st with few, and those of little worth.
But should Ulysses come, at his own isle
Again arrived, wide as these portals are,
To thee, at once, too narrow they should seem
To shoot thee forth with speed enough abroad.
He ceased—then tenfold indignation fired
Eurymachus; he furrow'd deep his brow
With frowns, and in wing'd accents thus replied.
Wretch, I shall roughly handle thee anon,
Who thus with fluent prate presumptuous darest
Disturb this numerous company, restrain'd
By no respect or fear. Either thou art
With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
Art always fool, and therefore babblest now;
Or thou art frantic haply with delight
That thou hast foil'd yon vagabond obscure.
So saying, he seized a stool; but to the knees
Ulysses flew of the Dulichian Prince
Amphinomus, and sat, fearing incensed

Eurymachus; he on his better hand
Smote full the cup-bearer; on the hall-floor
Loud rang the fallen beaker, and himself
Lay on his back clamouring in the dust.
Strait through the dusky hall tumult ensued
Among the suitors, of whom thus, a youth,
With eyes directed to the next, exclaim'd.
Would that this rambling stranger had elsewhere
Perish'd, or ever he had here arrived,
Then no such uproar had he caused as this!
This doth the beggar; he it is for whom
We wrangle thus, and may despair of peace
Or pleasure more; now look for strife alone.
Then in the midst Telemachus upstood
Majestic, and the suitors thus bespake.
Sirs! ye are mad, and can no longer eat
Or drink in peace; some dæmon troubles you.
But since ye all have feasted, to your homes
Go now, and, at your pleasure, to your beds;
Soonest were best, but I thrust no man hence.
He ceased; they gnawing stood their lips, aghast
With wonder that Telemachus in his speech
Such boldness used. Then rose Amphinomus,
Brave son of Nisus offspring of the King
Aretus, and the assembly thus address'd.
My friends! let none with contradiction thwart
And rude reply words rational and just;
Assault no more the stranger, nor of all
The servants of renown'd Ulysses here
Harm any. Come. Let the cup-bearer fill

To all, that due libation made, to rest
We may repair at home, leaving the Prince
To accommodate beneath his father's roof
The stranger, for he is the Prince's guest.
He ended, whose advice none disapproved.
The Hero Mulius then, Dulichian-born,
And herald of Amphinomus, the cup
Filling, dispensed it, as he stood, to all;
They, pouring forth to the Immortals, quaff'd
The luscious beverage, and when each had made
Libation, and such measure as he would
Of wine had drunk, then all to rest retired.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT OF THE NINETEENTH BOOK.

Ulysses and Telemachus remove the arms from the hall to an upper-chamber. The Hero then confers with Penelope, to whom he gives a fictitious narrative of his adventures. Euryclea, while bathing Ulysses, discovers him by a scar on his knee, but he prevents her communication of that discovery to Penelope.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIX.

THEY went, but left the noble Chief behind
In his own house, contriving, by the aid
Of Pallas, the destruction of them all,
And thus, in accents wing'd, again he said.
My son! we must remove and safe dispose
All these my well-forged implements of war;
And should the suitors, missing them, enquire
Where are they? thou shalt answer smoothly thus—
I have convey'd them from the reach of smoke,
For they appear no more the same which erst
Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
So smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
This weightier reason (thou shalt also say)
Some God suggested to me,—lest, inflamed
With wine, ye wound each other in your brawls,
Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
Itself of arms incites to their abuse.
He ceased, and in obedience to his will,

Calling the antient Euryclea forth,
His nurse, Telemachus enjoin'd her thus.
  Go—shut the women in; make fast the doors
Of their apartment, while I safe dispose
Elsewhere my father's implements of war,
Which, during his long absence, here have stood
Till smoke hath sullied them. For I have been
An infant hitherto, but wiser grown,
Would now remove them from the breath of fire.
  Then thus the gentle matron in return.
Yes truly,—and I wish that now, at length,
Thou would'st assert the privilege of thy years,
My son, thyself assuming charge of all,
Both house and stores; but who shall bear the light?
Since they, it seems, who would, are all forbidden.
  To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
This guest; for no man, from my table fed,
Come whence he may, shall be an idler here.
  He ended, nor his words flew wing'd away,
But Euryclea bolted every door.
Then, starting to the task, Ulysses caught,
And his illustrious son, the weapons thence,
Helmet, and bossy shield, and pointed spear,
While Pallas from a golden lamp illumed
The dusky way before them. At that sight
Alarm'd, the Prince his father thus address'd.
  Whence—whence is this, my father? I behold
A prodigy! the walls of the whole house,
The arches, fir-tree beams, and pillars tall

Shine in my view, as with the blaze of fire!
Some Power celestial, doubtless, is within.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Soft! ask no questions. Give no vent to thought.
Such is the custom of the Powers divine.
Hence, thou, to bed. I stay, that I may yet
Both in thy mother and her maidens move
More curiosity; yes—she with tears
Shall question me of all that I have seen.
He ended, and the Prince, at his command,
Guided by flaming torches, sought the couch
Where he was wont to sleep, and there he slept
On that night also, waiting the approach
Of sacred dawn. Thus was Ulysses left
Alone, and planning sat in solitude,
By Pallas' aid, the slaughter of his foes.
At length, Diana-like, or like herself
All golden Venus, (her apartment left,)
Enter'd Penelope. Beside the hearth
Her women planted her accustom'd seat
With silver wreathed and ivory. That throne
Icmalius made, artist renown'd, and join'd
A footstool to its splendid frame beneath,
Which ever with an ample fleece they spread.
There sat discrete Penelope; then came
Her beautiful attendants from within,
Who clear'd the litter'd bread, the board, and cups
From which the insolent companions drank.
They also raked the embers from the hearths
Now dim, and with fresh billets piled them high,

Both for illumination and for warmth.
Then yet again Melantho with rude speech
Opprobrious, thus, assail'd Ulysses' ear.
Guest—wilt thou trouble us throughout the night
Ranging the house? and linger'st thou a spy
Watching the women? Hence—get thee abroad,
Glad of such fare as thou hast found, or soon
With torches beaten we will thrust thee forth.
To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.
Petulant woman! wherefore thus incensed
Inveigh'st thou against me? is it because
I am not sleek? because my garb is mean?
Because I beg? thanks to necessity—
I would not else. But such as I appear,
Such all who beg and all who wander are.
I also lived the happy owner once
Of such a stately mansion, and have given
To numerous wanderers, whencesoe'er they came,
All that they needed; I was also served
By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
The envied owner opulent and blest.
But Jove (for so it pleased him) hath reduced
My all to nothing. Therefore well beware
Thou also, mistress! lest a day arrive
When all these charms by which thou shinest among
Thy sister-menials, fade; fear, too, lest her
Thou should'st perchance irritate, whom thou servest,
And lest Ulysses come, of whose return
Hope yet survives; but even though the Chief
Have perish'd, as ye think, and comes no more,

Consider yet his son, how bright the gifts
Shine of Apollo in the illustrious Prince
Telemachus; no woman, unobserved
By him, can now commit a trespass here;
His days of heedless infancy are past.
He ended, whom Penelope discrete
O'erhearing, her attendant sharp rebuked.
Shameless, audacious woman! known to me
Is thy great wickedness, which with thy life
Thou shalt atone; for thou wast well aware,
(Hearing it from myself,) that I design'd
To ask this stranger of my absent Lord,
For whose dear sake I never cease to mourn.
Then to her household's governess she said;
Bring now a seat, and spread it with a fleece,
Eurynome! that, undisturb'd, the guest
May hear and answer all that I shall ask.
She ended. Then the matron brought in haste
A polish'd seat, and spread it with a fleece,
On which the toil-accustom'd Hero sat,
And thus the chaste Penelope began.
Stranger! my first enquiry shall be this—
Who art thou? whence? where born, and sprung from whom?
Then answer thus Ulysses, wise, return'd.
O Queen! uncensurable by the lips
Of mortal man! thy glory climbs the skies
Unrivall'd, like the praise of some great King
Who o'er a numerous people and renown'd
Presiding like a Deity, maintains

Justice and truth. The earth, under his sway,
Her produce yields abundantly; the trees
Fruit-laden bend; the lusty flocks bring forth;
The Ocean teems with finny swarms beneath
His just controul, and all the land is blest.
Me therefore question of what else thou wilt
In thy own palace, but forbear to ask
From whom I sprang, and of my native land,
Lest thou, reminding me of those sad themes,
Augment my woes; for I have much endured;
Nor were it seemly, in another's house,
To pass the hours in sorrow and in tears,
Wearisome when indulged with no regard
To time or place; thy train (perchance thyself)
Would blame me, and I should reproach incur
As one tear-deluged through excess of wine.
  Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
The immortal Gods, O stranger, then destroy'd
My form, my grace, my beauty, when the Greeks
Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.
Could he, returning, my domestic charge
Himself intend, far better would my fame
Be so secured, and wider far diffused.
But I am wretched now, such storms of woe
The Gods have sent me; for as many Chiefs
As hold dominion in the neighbour isles
Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
Zacynthus; others, also, rulers here
In pleasant Ithaca, me, loth to wed,
Woo ceaseless, and my household stores consume.

I, therefore, neither guest nor suppliant heed,
Nor public herald more, but with regret
Of my Ulysses wear my soul away.
They, meantime, press my nuptials, which by art
I still procrastinate. Some God the thought
Suggested to me, to commence a robe
Of amplest measure and of subtlest woof,
Laborious task; which done, I thus address'd them.
Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief
Ulysses is no more, enforce not now
My nuptials; wait till I shall finish first
A funeral robe, (lest all my threads be marr'd,)
Which for the ancient Hero I prepare
Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest.
Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,
Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.
Such was my speech; they, unsuspicious all,
With my request complied. Thenceforth, all day
I wove the ample web, and, by the aid
Of torches, ravell'd it again at night.
Three years by artifice I thus their suit
Eluded safe; but when the fourth arrived,
And the same season after many moons
And fleeting days return'd, passing my train
Who had neglected to release the dogs,
They came, surprised, and reprimanded me.
Thus, through necessity, not choice, at last
I have perform'd it, in my own despight.
But no escape from marriage now remains,

Nor other subterfuge for me; meantime
My parents urge my nuptials, and my son
(Of age to note it) with disgust observes
His wealth consumed; for he is now become
Adult, and abler than myself to rule
The house, a Prince distinguish'd by the Gods.
Yet, stranger, after all, speak thy descent;
Say whence thou art; for not of fabulous birth
Art thou, nor from the oak, nor from the rock.
  Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.
O spouse revered of Laertiades!
Resolvest thou still to learn from whom I sprang?
Learn then; but know that thou shalt much augment
My present grief, natural to a man
Who hath, like me, long exiled from his home
Through various cities of the sons of men
Wander'd remote, and numerous woes endured.
Yet, though it pain me, I will tell thee all.
  There is a land amid the sable flood
Call'd Crete; fair, fruitful, circled by the sea.
Numerous are her inhabitants, a race
Not to be summ'd, and ninety towns she boasts.
Diverse their language is; Achaians some,
And some indigenous are; Cydonians there,
Crest-shaking Dorians, and Pelasgians dwell.
One city in extent the rest exceeds,
Cnossus; the city in which Minos reign'd,
Who, ever at a nine-years-close, conferr'd
With Jove himself; from him my father sprang,
The brave Deucalion; for Deucalion's sons

Were two, myself and King Idomeneus.
To Ilium he, on board his gallant barks
Follow'd the Atridæ. I, the youngest-born,
By my illustrious name, Æthon, am known,
But he ranks foremost both in worth and years.
There I beheld Ulysses, and within
My walls received him; for a violent wind
Had driven him from Malea (while he sought
The shores of Troy) to Crete. The storm his barks
Bore into the Amnisus, for the cave
Of Ilythia known, a dangerous port,
And which with difficulty he attain'd.
He, landing, instant to the city went,
Seeking Idomeneus; his friend of old,
As he affirm'd, and one whom much he loved.
But *he* was far remote, ten days advanced,
Perhaps eleven, on his course to Troy.
Him therefore I conducted to my home,
Where hospitably, and with kindest care
I entertain'd him, (for I wanted nought)
And for himself procured and for his band,
By public contribution, corn, and wine,
And beeves for food, that all might be sufficed.
Twelve days his noble Greecians there abode,
Port-lock'd by Boreas blowing with a force
Resistless even on the land, some God
So roused his fury; but the thirteenth day
The wind all fell, and they embark'd again.
With many a fiction specious, as he sat,
He thus her ear amused; she at the sound

Melting, with fluent tears her cheeks bedew'd;
And as the snow by Zephyrus diffused,
Melts on the mountain tops, when Eurus breathes,
And fills the channels of the running streams,
So melted she, and down her lovely cheeks
Pour'd fast the tears, him mourning as remote
Who sat beside her. Soft compassion touch'd
Ulysses of his consort's silent woe;
His eyes, as they had been of steel or horn,
Moved not, yet artful, he suppress'd his tears,
And she, at length, with overflowing grief
Satiate, replied, and thus enquired again.

Now, stranger, I shall prove thee, as I judge,
If thou, indeed, hast entertain'd in Crete
My spouse and his brave followers, as thou say'st.
Describe his raiment and himself; his own
Appearance, and the appearance of his friends.

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
Hard is the task, O Queen! (so long a time
Hath since elapsed,) to tell thee. Twenty years
Have pass'd since he forsook my native isle,
Yet, from my best remembrance, I will give
A likeness of him, such as now I may.
A double cloak, thick-piled, Mæonian-dyed,
The noble Chief had on; two fastenings held
The golden clasp, and it display'd in front
A well-wrought pattern with much art design'd.
An hound between his fore-feet holding fast
A dappled fawn, gaped eager on his prey.
All wonder'd, seeing how in lifeless gold

Express'd, the dog with open mouth her throat
Attempted still, and how the fawn with hoofs
Thrust trembling forward, struggled to escape.
That glorious mantle much I noticed, soft
To touch, as the dried garlick's glossy film;
Such was the smoothness of it, and it shone
Sun-bright; full many a maiden, trust me, view'd
The splendid texture with admiring eyes.
But mark me now; deep treasure in thy mind
This word. I know not if Ulysses wore
That cloak at home, or whether of his train
Some warrior gave it to him on his way,
Or else some host of his; for many loved
Ulysses, and with him might few compare.
I gave to him, myself, a brazen sword,
A purple cloak magnificent, and vest
Of royal length, and, when he sought his bark,
With princely pomp dismiss'd him from the shore.
An herald also waited on the Chief,
Somewhat his senior; him I next describe.
His back was bunch'd, his visage swarthy, curl'd
His poll, and he was named Eurybates;
A man whom most of all his followers far
Ulysses honour'd, for their minds were one.
He ceased; she, recognizing all the proofs
Distinctly by Ulysses named, was moved
Still more to weep, till with o'erflowing grief
Satiate, at length she answer'd him again.
Henceforth, O stranger, thou who hadst before
My pity, shalt my reverence share and love.

I folded for him with these hands the cloak
Which thou describest, produced it when he went,
And gave it to him; I that splendid clasp
Attach'd to it myself, more to adorn
My honour'd Lord, whom to his native land
Return'd secure I shall receive no more.
In such an evil hour Ulysses went
To that bad city never to be named.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Consort revered of Laertiades!
No longer let anxiety impair
Thy beauteous form, nor any grief consume
Thy spirits more for thy Ulysses' sake.
And yet I blame thee not; a wife deprived
Of her first mate to whom she had produced
Fair fruit of mutual love, would mourn his loss,
Although he were inferior far to thine,
Whom fame affirms the semblance of the Gods.
But cease to mourn. Hear me. I will relate
A faithful tale, nor will from thee withhold
Such tidings of Ulysses living still,
And of his safe return, as I have heard
Lately, in yon neighbouring opulent land
Of the Thesprotians. He returns enrich'd
With many precious stores from those obtain'd
Whom he hath visited; but he hath lost,
Departing from Thrinacia's isle, his bark
And all his loved companions in the Deep,
For Jove was adverse to him, and the Sun,
Whose beeves his followers slew. They perish'd all

Amid the billowy flood; but Him, the keel
Bestriding of his bark, the waves at length
Cast forth on the Phæacian's land, a race
Allied to heaven, who reverenced like a God
Thy husband, honour'd him with numerous gifts,
And willing were to have convey'd him home.
Ulysses, therefore, had attain'd long since
His native shore, but that he deem'd it best
To travel far, that he might still amass
More wealth; so much Ulysses all mankind
Excels in policy, and hath no peer.
This information from Thesprotia's King
I gain'd, from Phidon; to myself he swore
Libation offering under his own roof,
That both the bark was launch'd, and the stout crew
Prepared, that should conduct him to his home.
But me he first dismiss'd; for, as it chanced,
A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
To corn-enrich'd Dulichium. All the wealth
He shew'd me by the Chief amass'd, a store
To feed the house of yet another Prince
To the tenth generation; so immense
His treasures were within that palace lodged.
Himself he said was to Dodona gone,
Counsel to ask from the oracular oaks
Sublime of Jove, how safest he might seek,
After long exile thence, his native land,
If openly were best, or in disguise.
Thus, therefore, he is safe, and at his home

Well-nigh arrived, nor shall his country long
Want him. I swear it with a solemn oath.
First Jove be witness, King and Lord of all!
Next these domestic Gods of the renown'd
Ulysses, in whose royal house I sit,
That thou shalt see my saying all fulfill'd.
Ulysses shall this self-same year return,
This self-same month, ere yet the next begin.
Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Grant heaven, my guest, that this good word of thine
Fail not! then, soon shalt thou such bounty share
And friendship at my hands, that, at first sight,
Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.
But ah! my soul forebodes how it will prove;
Neither Ulysses will return, nor thou
Receive safe conduct hence; for we have here
None, such as once Ulysses was, to rule
His household with authority, and to send
With honourable convoy to his home
The worthy guest, or to regale him here.
Give him the bath, my maidens; spread his couch
With linen soft, with fleecy gaberdines[1]
And rugs of splendid hue, that he may lie
Waiting, well-warm'd, the golden morn's return.
Attend him also at the peep of day
With bath and unction, that, his seat resumed
Here in the palace, he may be prepared

[1] A gaberdine is a shaggy cloak of coarse but warm materials. Such always make part of Homer's bed-furniture.

For breakfast with Telemachus; and woe
To him who shall presume to incommode
Or cause him pain; that man shall be cashier'd
Hence instant, burn his anger as it may.
For how, my honour'd inmate! shalt thou learn
That I in wisdom œconomic aught
Pass other women, if unbathed, unoil'd,
Ill-clad, thou sojourn here? man's life is short.
Whoso is cruel, and to cruel arts
Addict, on him all men, while yet he lives,
Call plagues and curses down, and after death
Scorn and proverbial mockeries hunt his name.
But men, humane themselves, and given by choice
To offices humane, from land to land
Are rumour'd honourably by their guests,
And every tongue is busy in their praise.
Her answer'd then Ulysses ever-wise.
Consort revered of Laertiades!
Warm gaberdines and rugs of splendid hue
To me have odious been, since first the sight
Of Crete's snow-mantled mountain-tops, I lost,
Sweeping the billows with extended oars.
No; I will pass, as I am wont to pass
The sleepless night; for on a sordid couch
Outstretch'd, full many a night have I reposed
Till golden-charioted Aurora dawn'd.
Nor me the foot-bath pleases more; my foot
Shall none of all thy ministring maidens touch,
Unless there be some antient matron grave
Among them, who hath pangs of heart endured

Numerous, and keen as I have felt myself;
Her I refuse not. She may touch my feet.
Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
Dear guest! for of all travellers here arrived
From distant regions, I have none received
Discrete as thou, or whom I more have loved,
So just thy matter is, and with such grace
Express'd,—I have an ancient maiden grave,
The nurse who at my hapless husband's birth
Received him in her arms, and with kind care
Maternal rear'd him; she shall wash thy feet,
Although decrepid. Euryclea, rise!
Wash one coeval with thy Lord; for such
The feet and hands, it may be, are become
Of my Ulysses now; since man beset
With sorrow once, soon wrinkled grows and old.
She said, then Euryclea with both hands
Covering her face, in tepid tears profuse
Dissolved, and thus in mournful strains began.
Alas! my son, trouble for thy dear sake
Distracts me. Jove surely of all mankind
Thee hated most, though ever in thy heart
Devoutly given; for never mortal man
So many thighs of fatted victims burn'd,
And chosen hecatombs produced as thou
To Jove the Thunderer, him entreating still
That he would grant thee a serene old age,
And to instruct, thyself, thy glorious son.
Yet thus the God requites thee, cutting off
All hope of thy return:—oh ancient sir!

Him too, perchance, where'er he sits a guest
Beneath some foreign roof, the women taunt,
As all these shameless ones have taunted thee,
Fearing whose mockery thou forbidd'st their hands
This office, which Icarius' daughter wise
To me enjoins, and which I, glad, perform.
Yes, I will wash thy feet; both for her sake
And for thy own,—for sight of thee hath raised
A tempest in my mind. Hear now the cause!
Full many a guest forlorn we entertain,
But never any have I seen, whose size,
The fashion of whose foot, and pitch of voice,
Such likeness of Ulysses show'd, as thine.
To whom Ulysses, ever shrewd, replied.
Such close similitude, O antient dame!
As thou observest between thy Lord and me,
All who have seen us both, have ever found.
He said; then taking the resplendent vase
Allotted always to that use, she first
Infused cold water largely, then the warm.
Ulysses (for beside the hearth he sat)
Turn'd quick his face into the shade, alarm'd
Lest, handling him, she should at once remark
His scar, and all his stratagem unveil.
She then, approaching, minister'd the bath
To her own King, and at first touch discern'd
That token, by a bright-tusk'd boar of old
Impress'd, what time he to Parnassus went
To visit there Autolycus and his sons,
His mother's noble sire, who all mankind

In furtive[2] arts and fraudful oaths excell'd.
For such endowments he by gifts received
From Hermes' self, to whom the thighs of kids
He offer'd and of lambs, and, in return,
The watchful Hermes never left his side.
Autolycus, arriving in the isle
Of pleasant Ithaca, the new-born son
Of his own daughter found, whom on his knees
At close of supper Euryclea placed,
And thus the royal visitant address'd.
  Thyself, Autolycus! devise a name
For thy own daughter's son, by numerous prayers
Of thine and fervent, from the Gods obtained.
  Then answer thus Autolycus return'd.
My daughter and my daughter's spouse! the name
Which I shall give your boy, that let him bear.
Since after provocation and offence
To numbers given of either sex, I come,
Call him, Ulysses[3]; and when, grown mature,
He shall Parnassus visit, the abode
Magnificent in which his mother dwelt,
And where my treasures lie, from my own stores
I will enrich and send him joyful home.

[2] Homer's morals seem to allow to a good man dissimulation, and even an ambiguous oath, should they be necessary to save him from a villain. Thus in Book XX. Telemachus swears by Zeus, that he does not hinder his mother from marrying whom she pleases of the wooers, though at the same time he is plotting their destruction with his father. F.

[3] In the Greek 'ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ' from the verb *'οδυσσω*—Irascor, *I am angry.*

Ulysses, therefore, that he might obtain
Those princely gifts, went thither. Him arrived,
With right-hand gratulation and with words
Of welcome kind, Autolycus received,
Nor less his offspring; but the mother most
Of his own mother clung around his neck,
Amphithea; she with many a fervent kiss
His forehead press'd, and his bright-beaming eyes.
Then bade Autolycus his noble sons
Set forth a banquet. They, at his command,
Led in a fatted ox of the fifth year,
Which slaying first, they spread him carved abroad,
Then scored his flesh, transfix'd it with the spits,
And roasting all with culinary skill
Exact, gave each a portion. Thus they sat
Feasting all day, and till the sun declined;
But when the sun declined, and darkness fell,
Each sought his couch, and took the gift of sleep.
Then, soon as day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
Aurora look'd abroad, forth went the hounds,
And with the hounds Ulysses, and the youths,
Sons of Autolycus, to chase the boar.
Arrived at the Parnassian mount, they climb'd
His bushy sides, and to his airy heights
Ere long attain'd. It was the pleasant hour
When from the gently-swelling flood profound
The sun, emerging, first smote on the fields.
The hunters reach'd the valley; foremost ran,
Questing, the hounds; behind them, swift, the sons
Came of Autolycus, with whom advanced

The illustrious Prince Ulysses, pressing close
The hounds, and brandishing his massy spear.
There, hid in thickest shades, lay an huge boar.
That covert neither rough winds blowing moist
Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun
Smite through it, or fast falling showers pervade,
So thick it was, and underneath, the ground
With litter of dry foliage strew'd profuse.
Hunters and dogs approaching him, his ear
The sound of feet perceived; upridging high
His bristly back and glaring fire, he sprang
Forth from the shrubs, and in defiance stood
Near and right opposite. Ulysses, first,
Rush'd on him, elevating his long spear
Ardent to wound him; but, preventing quick
His foe, the boar gash'd him above the knee.
Much flesh, assailing him oblique, he tore
With his rude tusk, but to the Hero's bone
Pierced not; Ulysses *his* right shoulder reach'd;
And with a deadly thrust impell'd the point
Of his bright spear through him and far beyond.
Loud yell'd the boar, sank in the dust, and died.
Around Ulysses, then, the busy sons
Throng'd of Autolycus; expert they braced
The wound of the illustrious hunter bold,
With incantation stanch'd the sable blood,
And sought in haste their father's house again,
Whence, heal'd and gratified with splendid gifts
They sent him soon rejoicing to his home,
Themselves rejoicing also. Glad their son

His parents saw again, and of the scar
Enquired, where given, and how? He told them all,
How to Parnassus with his friends he went,
Sons of Autolycus to hunt, and how
A boar had gash'd him with his ivory tusk.
That scar, while chafing him with open palms,
The matron knew; she left his foot to fall;
Down dropp'd his leg into the vase; the brass
Rang, and, o'ertilted by the sudden shock,
Pour'd forth the water, flooding wide the floor.
Her spirit joy at once and sorrow seized;
Tears fill'd her eyes; her intercepted voice
Died in her throat; but to Ulysses' beard
Her hand advancing, thus, at length she spake.
Thou art himself, Ulysses. Oh my son!
Dear to me, and my master as thou art,
I knew thee not, till I had touch'd the scar.
She said, and to Penelope her eyes
Directed, all impatient to declare
Her own Ulysses even then at home.
But she, nor eye nor ear for aught that pass'd
Had then, her fixt attention so entire
Minerva had engaged. Then, darting forth
His arms, the Hero with his right-hand close
Compress'd her throat, and nearer to himself
Drawing her with his left, thus caution'd her.
Why would'st thou ruin me? Thou gavest me milk
Thyself from thy own breast. See me return'd
After long sufferings, in the twentieth year,
To my own land. But since (some God the thought

Suggesting to thee) thou hast learn'd the truth,
Silence! lest others learn it from thy lips.
For this I say, nor shall the threat be vain;
If God vouchsafe to me to overcome
The haughty suitors, when I shall inflict
Death on the other women of my house,
Although my nurse, thyself shalt also die.
  Him answer'd Euryclea then, discrete.
My son! oh how could so severe a word
Escape thy lips? my fortitude of mind
Thou know'st, and even now shalt prove me firm
As iron, secret as the stubborn rock.
But hear and mark me well. Should'st thou prevail,
Assisted by a Power divine, to slay
The haughty suitors, I will then, myself,
Give thee to know of all the female train
Who have dishonour'd thee, and who respect.
  To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
My nurse, it were superfluous; spare thy tongue
That needless task. I can distinguish well
Myself, between them, and shall know them all;
But hold thy peace. Hush! leave it with the Gods.
  So he; then went the antient matron forth,
That she might serve him with a second bath,
For the whole first was spilt. Thus, laved at length,
And smooth'd with oil, Ulysses nearer pull'd
His seat toward the glowing hearth to enjoy
More warmth, and drew his tatters o'er the scar.
Then, prudent, thus Penelope began.
  One question, stranger, I shall yet propound,

Though brief, for soon the hour of soft repose
Grateful to all, and even to the sad
Whom gentle sleep forsakes not, will arrive.
But heaven to me immeasurable woe
Assigns,—whose sole delight is to consume
My days in sighs, while here retired I sit,
Watching my maidens' labours and my own;
But (night return'd, and all to bed retired)
I press mine also, yet with deep regret
And anguish lacerated, even there.
As when at spring's first entrance, her sweet song
The azure-crested nightingale renews,
Daughter of Pandarus; within the grove's
Thick foliage perch'd, she pours her echoing voice
Now deep, now clear, still varying the strain
With which she mourns her Itylus, her son
By royal Zethus, whom she, erring[4], slew,
So also I, by soul distressing doubts
Toss'd ever, muse if I shall here remain
A faithful guardian of my son's affairs,
My husband's bed respecting, and not less
My own fair fame, or whether I shall him
Of all my suitors follow to his home
Who noblest seems, and offers richest dower.
My son while he was infant yet, and own'd

[4] She intended to slay the son of her husband's brother Amphion, incited to it by envy of his wife, who had six children, while herself had only two, but through mistake she slew her own son Itylus, and for her punishment was transformed by Jupiter into a nightingale.

An infant's mind, could never give consent
That I should wed and leave him; but, at length,
Since he hath reach'd the stature of a man,
He wishes my departure hence, the waste
Viewing indignant by the suitors made.
But I have dream'd. Hear, and expound my dream.
My geese are twenty, which within my walls
I feed with sodden wheat; they serve to amuse
Sometimes my sorrow. From the mountains came
An eagle, huge, hook-beak'd, brake all their necks,
And slew them; scatter'd on the palace-floor
They lay, and he soar'd swift into the skies.
Dream only as it was, I wept aloud,
Till all my maidens, gather'd by my voice,
Arriving, found me weeping still, and still
Complaining, that the eagle had at once
Slain all my geese. But, to the palace-roof
Stooping again, he sat, and with a voice
Of human sound, forbad my tears, and said—
  Courage! O daughter of the far-renown'd
Icarius! no vain dream thou hast beheld,
But, in thy sleep, a truth. The slaughter'd geese
Denote thy suitors. I who have appear'd
An eagle in thy sight, am yet indeed
Thy husband, who have now, at last, return'd,
Death, horrid death designing for them all.
  He said; then waking at the voice, I cast
An anxious look around, and saw my geese
Beside their tray, all feeding as before.
  Her then Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.

O Queen! it is not possible to miss
Thy dream's plain import, since Ulysses' self
Hath told thee the event; thy suitors all
Must perish; not one suitor shall escape.
To whom Penelope discrete replied.
Dreams are inexplicable, O my guest!
And oft-times mere delusions that receive
No just accomplishment. There are two gates[5]
Through which the fleeting phantoms pass; of horn
Is one, and one of ivory. Such dreams
As through the thin-leaf'd ivory portal come
Soothe, but perform not, uttering empty sounds;
But such as through the polish'd horn escape,
If haply seen by any mortal eye,
Prove faithful witnesses, and are fulfill'd.
But through those gates my wondrous dream, I think,
Came not; thrice welcome were it else to me
And to my son. Now mark my words; attend.
This is the hated morn that from the house
Removes me of Ulysses. I shall fix,
This day, the rings for trial to them all
Of archership; Ulysses' custom was
To plant twelve spikes[6], all regular arranged

[5] The difference of the two substances may perhaps serve to account for the preference given in this case to the gate of horn; horn being transparent, and as such emblematical of truth; while ivory, from its whiteness, promises light, but is, in fact, opaque. F.

[6] The translation here is somewhat pleonastic for the sake of perspicuity; the original is clear in itself, but not to us who

Like galley-props, and crested with a ring,
Then standing far remote, true in his aim
He with his whizzing shaft would thrid them all.
This is the contest in which now I mean
To prove the suitors; him, who with most ease
Shall bend the bow, and shoot through all the rings,
I follow, this dear mansion of my youth
Leaving, so fair, so fill'd with every good,
Though still to love it even in my dreams.
  Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.
Consort revered of Laertiades!
Postpone not this contention, but appoint
Forthwith the trial; for Ulysses here
Will sure arrive, ere they (his polish'd bow
Long tampering) shall prevail to stretch the nerve,
And speed the arrow through the iron rings.
  To whom Penelope replied discrete.
Would'st thou with thy sweet converse, O my guest!
Here soothe me still, sleep ne'er should influence
These eyes the while; but always to resist
Sleep's power is not for man, to whom the Gods
Each circumstance of his condition here
Fix universally. Myself will seek
My own apartment at the palace-top,
And there will lay me down on my sad couch,
For such it hath been, and with tears of mine

have no such practice. Twelve stakes were fixed in the earth, each having a ring at the top; the order in which they stood was so exact, that an arrow sent with an even hand through the first ring, would pass them all.

Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
To that bad city, never to be named.
There will I sleep; but sleep thou here below,
Either, thyself, preparing on the ground
Thy couch, or on a couch by these prepared.
So saying, she to her splendid chamber thence
Retired, not sole, but by her female train
Attended; there arrived, she wept her spouse,
Her loved Ulysses, till Minerva dropp'd
The balm of slumber on her weary lids.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XX.

ARGUMENT OF THE TWENTIETH BOOK.

Ulysses, doubting whether he shall destroy or not the women servants who commit lewdness with the suitors, resolves at length to spare them for the present. He asks an omen from Jupiter, and that he would grant him also to hear some propitious words from the lips of one in the family. His petitions are both answered. Preparation is made for the feast. Whilst the suitors sit at table, Pallas smites them with a horrid frenzy. Theoclymenus, observing the strange effects of it, prophecies their destruction, and they deride his prophecy.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XX.

But in the vestibule the Hero lay
On a bull's hide undress'd, o'er which he spread
The fleece of many a sheep slain by the Greeks,
And, cover'd by the household's governess
With a wide cloak, composed himself to rest.
Yet slept he not, but meditating lay
Woe to his enemies. Meantime the train
Of women wonted to the suitors' arms,
Issuing all mirth and laughter, in his soul
A tempest raised of doubts, whether at once
To slay, or to permit them yet to give
Their lusty paramours one last embrace.
As growls the mastiff standing on the start
For battle, if a stranger's foot approach
Her cubs new-whelp'd—so growl'd Ulysses' heart,
While wonder fill'd him at their impious deeds.
But, smiting on his breast, thus he reproved
The mutinous inhabitant within.
Heart! bear it. Worse than this thou didst endure
When, uncontroulable by force of man,

The Cyclops thy illustrious friends devour'd.
Thy patience then fail'd not, till prudence found
Deliverance for thee on the brink of fate.
So disciplined the Hero his own heart,
Which, tractable, endured the rigorous curb,
And patient; yet he turn'd from side to side.
As when some hungry swain turns oft a maw
Unctuous and savoury on the burning coals,
Quick expediting his desired repast,
So he from side to side roll'd, pondering deep
How likeliest with success he might assail
Those shameless suitors; one to many opposed.
Then, sudden from the skies descending, came
Minerva in a female form; her stand
Above his head she took, and thus she spake.
Why sleep'st thou not, unhappiest of mankind?
Thou art at home; here dwells thy wife, and here
Thy son; a son, whom all might wish their own.
Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
O Goddess! true is all that thou hast said,
But, not without anxiety, I muse
How, single as I am, I shall assail
Those shameless suitors who frequent my courts
Daily, and always their whole multitude.
This weightier theme I meditate beside;
Should I, with Jove's concurrence and with thine
Prevail to slay them, how shall I escape,
Myself[1], at last? oh Goddess, weigh it well.

[1] That is, how shall I escape the vengeance of their kindred?

Him answer'd then Pallas cœrulean-eyed.
Oh faithless man! a man will in his friend
Confide, though mortal, and in valour less
And wisdom than himself; but I who keep
Thee in all difficulties, am divine.
I tell thee plainly. Were we hemm'd around
By fifty troops of shouting warriors bent
To slay thee, thou should'st yet securely drive
The flocks away and cattle of them all.
But yield to sleep's soft influence; for to lie
All night thus watchful, is, itself, distress.
Fear not. Deliverance waits, not far remote.
So saying, she o'er Ulysses' eyes diffused
Soft slumbers, and when sleep that soothes the mind
And nerves the limbs afresh had seized him once,
To the Olympian summit swift return'd.
But his chaste spouse awoke; she weeping sat
On her soft couch, and noblest of her sex,
Satiate at length with tears, her prayer address'd
First to Diana of the Powers above.
Diana, aweful progeny of Jove!
I would that with a shaft this moment sped
Into my bosom, thou would'st here conclude
My mournful life! or, oh that, as it flies,
Snatching me through the pathless air, a storm
Would whelm me deep in Ocean's restless tide!
So, when the Gods their parents had destroy'd,
Storms suddenly the beauteous daughters[2] snatch'd

[2] Aëdon, Cleothera, Merope.

Of Pandarus away; them left forlorn
Venus with curds, with honey and with wine
Fed duly; Juno gave them to surpass
All women in the charms of face and mind,
With graceful stature eminent the chaste
Diana bless'd them, and in works of art
Illustrious, Pallas taught them to excell.
But when the foam-sprung Goddess to the skies
A suitress went on their behalf, to obtain
Blest nuptials for them from the Thunderer Jove,
(For Jove the happiness, himself, appoints,
And the unhappiness of all below,)
Meantime, the Harpies ravishing away
Those virgins, gave them to the Furies three,
That they might serve them. O that me the Gods
Inhabiting Olympus so would hide
From human eyes for ever, or bright-hair'd
Diana pierce me with a shaft, that while
Ulysses yet engages all my thoughts,
My days concluded, I might 'scape the pain
Of gratifying some inferior Chief!
This is supportable, when (all the day
To sorrow given) the mourner sleeps at night;
For sleep, when it hath once the eyelids veil'd,
All reminiscence blots of all alike,
Both good and ill; but me the Gods afflict
Not seldom even in dreams, and at my side,
This night again, one lay resembling him;
Such as my own Ulysses when he join'd
Achaia's warriors; my exulting heart
No airy dream believed it, but a truth.

While thus she spake, in orient gold enthroned
Came forth the morn; Ulysses, as she wept,
Heard plain her lamentation; him that sound
Alarm'd; he thought her present, and himself
Known to her. Gathering hastily the cloak
His covering, and the fleeces, them he placed
Together on a throne within the hall,
But bore the bull's-hide forth into the air.
Then, lifting high his hands to Jove, he pray'd.
Eternal Sire! if over moist and dry
Ye have with good will sped me to my home
After much suffering, grant me from the lips
Of some domestic now awake, to hear
Words of propitious omen, and thyself
Vouchsafe me still some other sign abroad.
Such prayer he made, and Jove omniscient heard.
Sudden he thunder'd from the radiant heights
Olympian; glad, Ulysses heard the sound.
A woman, next, a labourer at the mill
Hard by, where all the palace-mills were wrought,
Gave him the omen of propitious sound.
Twelve maidens, day by day, toil'd at the mills,
Meal grinding, some of barley, some of wheat,
Marrow[3] of man. The rest (their portion ground)
All slept; she only from her task as yet
Ceased not, for she was feeblest of them all;
She rested on her mill, and thus pronounced
The happy omen by her Lord desired.

[3] μυελον ανδρων.

Jove, Father, Governor of heaven and earth!
Loud thou hast thunder'd from the starry skies
By no cloud veil'd; a sign propitious, given
To whom I know not; but oh grant the prayer
Of a poor bond-woman! appoint their feast
This day, the last that in Ulysses' house
The suitors shall enjoy, for whom I drudge,
With aching heart and trembling knees their meal
Grinding continual. Feast they here no more!
She ended, and the listening Chief received
With equal joy both signs; for well he hoped
That he should punish soon those guilty men.
And now the other maidens in the hall
Assembling, kindled on the hearth again
The unwearied blaze; then, godlike from his couch
Arose Telemachus, and fresh-attired,
Athwart his shoulders his bright faulchion slung,
Bound his fair sandals to his feet, and took
His sturdy spear pointed with glittering brass;
Advancing to the portal, there he stood,
And Euryclea thus, his nurse, bespake.
Nurse! have ye with respectful notice served
Our guest? or hath he found a sordid couch
Even where he might? for, prudent though she be,
My mother, inattentive oft, the worse
Treats kindly, and the better sends away.
Whom Euryclea answer'd thus discrete.
Blame not, my son! who merits not thy blame.
The guest sat drinking till he would no more,
And ate, till, question'd, he replied—Enough.

But when the hour of sleep call'd him to rest,
She gave commandment to her female train
To spread his couch. Yet he, like one forlorn,
And through despair, indifferent to himself,
Both bed and rugs refused, and in the porch
On skins of sheep and on an undress'd hide
Reposed, where we threw covering over him.
She ceased, and grasping his bright-headed spear,
Forth went the Prince attended, as he went,
By his fleet hounds; to the assembled Greeks
In council with majestic gait he moved,
And Euryclea, daughter wise of Ops,
Pisenor's son, call'd to the serving-maids.
Haste ye! be diligent! sweep the palace-floor
And sprinkle it; then give the sumptuous seats
Their purple coverings. Let others cleanse
With sponges all the tables, wash and rince
The beakers well, and goblets rich-emboss'd;
Run others to the fountain, and bring thence
Water with speed. The suitors will not long
Be absent, but will early come to-day,
For this day is a public festival[4].
So she; whom all, obedient, heard; forth went
Together, twenty to the chrystal fount,
While in their several provinces the rest
Bestirr'd them brisk at home. Then enter'd all
The suitors, and began cleaving the wood.
Meantime, the women from the fountain came,

[4] The new moon.

Whom soon the swine-herd follow'd, driving three
His fattest brawns; them in the spacious court
He feeding left, and to Ulysses' side
Approaching, courteously bespake the Chief.
Guest! look the Greecians on thee with respect
At length, or still disdainful as before?
Then, answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Yes—and I would that vengeance from the Gods
Might pay their insolence, who in a house
Not theirs, dominion exercise, and plan
Unseemly projects, shameless as they are!
Thus they conferr'd; and now Melanthius came
The goat-herd, driving, with the aid of two
His fellow-swains, the fattest of his goats
To feast the suitors. In the sounding porch
The goats he tied, then, drawing near, in terms
Reproachful thus assail'd Ulysses' ear.
How, stranger! perseverest thou, begging, still
To vex the suitors? wilt thou not depart?
Scarce shall we settle this dispute, I judge,
Till we have tasted each the other's fist;
Thou art unreasonable thus to beg
Here always;—have the Greeks no feasts beside?
He spake, to whom Ulysses answer none
Return'd, but shook his brows, and silent framed
Terrible purposes. Then, third, approach'd
Chief o'er the herds, Philœtius; fatted goats
He for the suitors brought, with which he drove
An heifer; (ferry-men had pass'd them o'er,
Carriers of all who on their coast arrive;)

He tied them in the sounding porch, then stood
Beside the swine-herd, to whom thus he said.
Who is this guest, Eumæus, here arrived
So lately? from what nation hath he come?
What parentage and country boasts the man?
I pity him, whose figure seems to speak
Royalty in him. Heaven will surely plunge
The race of common wanderers deep in woe,
If thus it destine even Kings to mourn.
He ceased; and, with his right hand, drawing nigh,
Welcomed Ulysses, whom he thus bespake.
Hail venerable guest! and be thy lot
Prosperous at least hereafter, who art held
At present, in the bonds of numerous ills.
Thou, Jupiter, of all the Gods, art most
Severe, and sparest not to inflict distress
Even on creatures from thyself derived[5].
I had no sooner mark'd thee, than my eyes
Swam, and the sweat gush'd from me at the thought
Of dear Ulysses; for if yet he live
And see the sun, such tatters, I suppose,
He wears, a wanderer among human-kind.
But if already with the dead he dwell
In Pluto's drear abode, oh then, alas
For kind Ulysses! who consign'd to me,
While yet a boy, his Cephalenian herds,
And they have now encreased to such a store
Innumerable of broad-fronted beeves,

[5] He is often called—πατηρ ανδρων τε θεων τε.

As only care like mine could have produced.
These, by command of others, I transport
For their regale, who neither heed his son,
Nor tremble at the anger of the Gods,
But long have wish'd ardently to divide
And share the substance of our absent Lord.
Me therefore this thought occupies, and haunts
My mind not seldom; while the heir survives
It were no small offence to drive his herds
Afar, and migrate to a foreign land;
Yet here to dwell, suffering oppressive wrongs
While I attend another's beeves, appears
Still less supportable; and I had fled,
And I had served some other mighty Chief
Long since, (for patience fails me to endure
My present lot,) but that I cherish still
Some hope of my ill-fated Lord's return,
To rid his palace of these lawless guests.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Herdsman! since neither void of sense thou seem'st,
Nor yet dishonest, but myself am sure
That thou art owner of a mind discrete,
Hear therefore, for I swear! bold I attest
Jove and this hospitable board, and these
The Lares[6] of the noble Chief, whose hearth
Protects me now, that ere thy going hence,
Ulysses surely shall have reach'd his home,
And thou shalt see him, if thou wilt, thyself,
Slaying the suitors who now lord it here.

[6] Household Gods who presided over the hearth.

Him answer'd then the keeper of his beeves.
Oh stranger! would but the Saturnian King
Perform that word, thou should'st be taught (thyself
Eye-witness of it) what an arm is mine.
Eumæus also every power of heaven
Entreated, that Ulysses might possess
His home again. Thus mutual they conferr'd.
Meantime, in conference close the suitors plann'd
Death for Telemachus; but while they sat
Consulting, on their left the bird of Jove
An eagle soar'd, grasping a timorous dove.
Then thus Amphinomus the rest bespake.
Oh friends! our consultation how to slay
Telemachus, will never smoothly run
To its effect; but let us to the feast.
So spake Amphinomus, whose counsel pleased.
Then, all into the royal house repair'd,
And on the thrones and couches throwing off
Their mantles, slew the fatted goats, the brawns,
The sheep full-sized, and heifer of the herd.
The roasted entrails first they shared, then fill'd
The beakers, and the swine-herd placed the cups;
Philœtius, chief intendant of the beeves,
Served all with baskets elegant of bread,
While all their cups Melanthius charged with wine,
And they assail'd at once the ready feast.
Meantime Telemachus, with forecast shrewd,
Fast by the marble threshold, but within
The spacious hall his father placed, to whom
A sordid seat he gave and scanty board.

A portion of the entrails, next, he set
Before him, fill'd a golden goblet high,
And thus, in presence of them all, began.
  There seated now, drink as the suitors drink.
I will, myself, their biting taunts forbid,
And violence. This edifice is mine,
Not public property; my father first
Possess'd it, and my right from him descends.
Suitors! controul your tongues, nor with your hands
Offend, lest contest fierce and war ensue.
  He ceased; they gnawing, sat, their lips aghast
With wonder that Telemachus in his speech
Such boldness used. Then spake Eupithes' son,
Antinoüs, and the assembly thus address'd.
  Let pass, ye Greeks! the language of the Prince,
Harsh as it is, and big with threats to us.
Had Jove permitted, his orations here,
Although thus eloquent, ere now had ceased.
  So spake Antinoüs, whom Ulysses' son
Heard unconcern'd. And now the heralds came
In solemn pomp, conducting through the streets
A sacred hecatomb, when in the grove
Umbrageous of Apollo, King shaft-arm'd,
The assembled Greecians met. The savoury roast
Finish'd, and from the spits withdrawn, each shared
His portion of the noble feast, and such
As they enjoy'd themselves the attendants placed
Before Ulysses, for the Hero's son
Himself, Telemachus, had so enjoin'd.
But Pallas (that they might exasperate more

Ulysses) suffer'd not the suitor Chiefs
To banquet, guiltless of heart-piercing scoffs
Malign. There was a certain suitor named
Ctesippus, born in Samos; base of mind
Was he and profligate, but in the wealth
Confiding of his father, woo'd the wife
Of long-exiled Ulysses. From his seat
The haughty suitors thus that man address'd.
Ye noble suitors, I would speak; attend!
The guest is served; he hath already shared
Equal with us; nor less the laws demand
Of hospitality; for neither just
It were nor decent, that a guest, received
Here by Telemachus, should be denied
His portion of the feast. Come then—myself
Will give to him, that he may also give
To her who laved him in the bath, or else
To whatsoever menial here he will.
So saying, he from a basket near at hand
Heaved an ox-foot, and with a vigorous arm
Hurl'd it. Ulysses gently bow'd his head,
Shunning the blow, but gratified his just
Resentment with a broad sardonic[7] smile
Of dread significance. He smote the wall.
Then thus Telemachus rebuked the deed.
Ctesippus, thou art fortunate; the bone
Struck not the stranger, for he shunn'd the blow;
Else, I had surely thrust my glittering lance

[7] A smile of displeasure.

Right through thee; then, no hymenæal rites
Of thine should have employ'd thy father here,
But thy funereal. No man therefore treat
Me with indignity within these walls,
For though of late a child, I can discern
Now, and distinguish between good and ill.
Suffice it that we patiently endure
To be spectators daily of our sheep
Slaughter'd, our bread consumed, our stores of wine
Wasted; for what can one to all opposed?
Come then—persist no longer in offence
And hostile hate of me; or if ye wish
To slay me, pause not. It were better far
To die, and I had rather much be slain,
Than thus to witness your atrocious deeds
Day after day; to see our guests abused,
With blows insulted, and the women dragg'd
With a licentious violence obscene
From side to side of all this fair abode.
He said, and all sat silent, till at length
Thus Agelaüs spake, Diastor's son.
My friends! let none with contradiction thwart
And rude reply, words rational and just;
Assault no more the stranger, nor of all
The servants of renown'd Ulysses here
Harm any. My advice, both to the Queen
And to Telemachus, shall gentle be,
May it but please them. While the hope survived
Within your bosoms of the safe return
Of wise Ulysses to his native isle,

So long good reason was that she should use
Delay, and hold our wooing in suspence;
For had Ulysses come, that course had proved
Wisest and best; but that he comes no more
Appears now manifest. Thou, therefore, Prince!
Seeking thy mother, counsel her to wed
The noblest, and who offers richest dower,
That thou, for thy peculiar, may'st enjoy
Thy own inheritance in peace and ease,
And she, departing, find another home.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
I swear by Jove, and by my father's woes,
Who either hath deceased far from his home,
Or lives a wanderer, that I interpose
No hindrance to her nuptials. Let her wed
Who offers most, and even whom she will.
But to dismiss her rudely were a deed
Unfilial.—That I dare not;—God forbid!
So spake Telemachus. Then Pallas struck
The suitors with delirium; wide they stretch'd
Their jaws with unspontaneous laughter loud;
Their meat dripp'd blood; tears fill'd their eyes, and dire
Presages of approaching woe, their hearts.
Then thus the prophet Theoclymenus[8].
Ah miserable men! what curse is this
That takes you now? night wraps itself around
Your faces, bodies, limbs; the palace shakes
With peals of groans—and oh, what floods ye weep!

[8] Who had sought refuge in the ship of Telemachus when he left Sparta, and came with him to Ithaca.

I see the walls and arches dappled thick
With gore; the vestibule is throng'd, the court
On all sides throng'd with apparitions grim
Of slaughter'd men sinking into the gloom
Of Erebus; the sun is blotted out
From heaven, and midnight whelms you premature.
He said, they hearing laugh'd; and thus the son
Of Polybus, Eurymachus replied.
This wanderer from a distant shore hath left
His wits behind. Hoa there! conduct him hence
Into the forum; since he dreams it night
Already, teach him there that it is day.
Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus.
I have no need, Eurymachus, of guides
To lead me hence, for I have eyes and ears,
The use of both my feet, and of a mind
In no respect irrational or wild.
These shall conduct me forth, for well I know
That evil threatens you, such too as none
Shall 'scape of all the suitors, whose delight
Is to insult the unoffending guest
Received beneath this hospitable roof.
He said, and, issuing from the palace, sought
Piræus' house, who gladly welcomed him.
Then all the suitors on each other cast
A look significant, and, to provoke
Telemachus the more, fleer'd at his guests.
Of whom a youth thus, insolent, began.
No living wight, Telemachus, had e'er
Guests such as thine. Witness, we know not who,

This hungry vagabond, whose means of life
Are none, and who hath neither skill nor force
To earn them, a mere burthen on the ground.
Witness the other also, who upstarts
A prophet suddenly. Take my advice;
I counsel wisely; send them both on board
Some gallant bark to Sicily for sale;
Thus shall they somewhat profit thee at last.
So spake the suitors, whom Telemachus
Heard unconcern'd, and silent, look'd and look'd
Toward his father, watching still the time
When he should punish that licentious throng.
Meantime, Icarius' daughter, who had placed
Her splendid seat opposite, heard distinct
Their taunting speeches. They, with noisy mirth,
Feasted deliciously, for they had slain
Many a fat victim; but a sadder feast
Than soon the Goddess and the warrior Chief
Should furnish for them, none shall ever share,
Of which their crimes had furnish'd first the cause.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXI.

ARGUMENT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST BOOK.

Penelope proposes to the suitors a contest with the bow, herself the prize. They prove unable to bend the bow; when Ulysses having with some difficulty possessed himself of it, manages it with the utmost ease, and dispatches his arrow through twelve rings erected for the trial.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXI.

MINERVA now, Goddess cœrulean-eyed,
Prompted Icarius' daughter, the discrete
Penelope, with bow and rings to prove
Her suitors in Ulysses' courts, a game
Terrible in conclusion to them all.
First, taking in her hand the brazen key
Well-forged, and fitted with an ivory grasp,
Attended by the women of her train
She sought her inmost chamber, the recess
In which she kept the treasures of her Lord,
His brass, his gold, and steel elaborate.
Here lay his stubborn bow, and quiver fill'd
With numerous shafts, a fatal store. That bow
He had received and quiver from the hand
Of godlike Iphitus Eurytides,
Whom, in Messenia [1], in the house he met
Of brave Orsilochus. Ulysses came
Demanding payment of arrearage due

[1] A province of Laconia.

From all that land; for a Messenian fleet
Had borne from Ithaca three hundred sheep,
With all their shepherds; for which cause, ere yet
Adult, he voyaged to that distant shore,
Deputed by his sire, and by the Chiefs
Of Ithaca, to make the just demand.
But Iphitus had thither come to seek
Twelve mares and twelve mule colts which he had lost,
A search that cost him soon a bloody death.
For, coming to the house of Hercules
The valiant task-performing son of Jove,
He perish'd there, slain by his cruel host
Who, heedless of heaven's wrath, and of the rights
Of his own board, first fed, then slaughter'd him;
For in *his* house the mares and colts were hidden.
He, therefore, occupied in that concern,
Meeting Ulysses there, gave him the bow
Which, erst, huge Eurytus had borne, and which
Himself had from his dying sire received.
Ulysses, in return, on him bestow'd
A spear and sword, pledges of future love
And hospitality; but never more
They met each other at the friendly board,
For, ere that hour arrived, the son of Jove
Slew his own guest, the godlike Iphitus.
Thus came the bow into Ulysses' hands,
Which never in his gallant barks he bore
To battle with him, (though he used it oft
In times of peace,) but left it safely stored
At home, a dear memorial of his friend.

Soon as, divinest of her sex, arrived
At that same chamber, with her foot she press'd
The oaken threshold bright, on which the hand
Of no mean architect had stretch'd the line,
Who had erected also on each side
The posts on which the splendid portal hung,
She loosed the ring and brace, then introduced
The key, and aiming[2] at them from without,
Struck back the bolts. The portals, at that stroke,
Sent forth a tone deep as the pastured bull's,
And flew wide open. She ascending next
The elevated floor on which the chests
That held her own fragrant apparel stood,
With lifted hand aloft took down the bow
In its embroider'd bow-case safe enclosed.
Then sitting there, she lay'd it on her knees,
Weeping aloud, and drew it from the case.
Thus weeping over it long time she sat,
Till satiate, at the last, with grief and tears,
Descending by the palace steps she sought
Again the haughty suitors, with the bow
Elastic, and the quiver in her hand
Replete with pointed shafts, a deadly store.
Her maidens, as she went, bore after her
A coffer fill'd with prizes by her Lord,
Much brass and steel; and when at length she came,

[2] The reader will of course observe, that the whole of this process implies a sort of mechanism very different from that with which we are acquainted.—The translation, I believe, is exact.

Loveliest of women, where the suitors sat,
Between the pillars of the stately dome
Pausing, before her beauteous face she held
Her lucid veil, and by two matrons chaste
Supported, the assembly thus address'd.
Ye noble suitors, hear, who rudely haunt
This palace of a Chief long absent hence,
Whose substance ye have now long time consumed,
Nor palliative have yet contrived, or could,
Save your ambition to make me a bride,—
Attend this game to which I call you forth.
Now, suitors! prove yourselves with this huge bow
Of wide-renown'd Ulysses; he who draws
Easiest the bow, and who his arrow sends
Through twice six rings, he takes me to his home,
And I must leave this mansion of my youth
Plenteous, magnificent, which doubtless oft
I shall remember even in my dreams.
So saying, she bade Eumæus lay the bow
Before them, and the twice six rings of steel.
He wept, received them, and obey'd; nor wept
The herdsman less, seeing the bow which erst
His Lord had occupied; when at their tears
Indignant, thus, Antinoüs began.
Ye rural drones, whose purblind eyes see not
Beyond the present hour, egregious fools!
Why weeping trouble ye the Queen, too much
Before afflicted for her husband lost?
Either partake the banquet silently,
Or else go weep abroad, leaving the bow,

That stubborn test, to us; for none, I judge,
None here shall bend this polish'd bow with ease,
Since in this whole assembly I discern
None like Ulysses, whom myself have seen
And recollect, though I was then a boy.
He said, but in his heart meantime the hope
Cherish'd, that he should bend, himself, the bow,
And pass the rings; yet was he destined first
Of all that company to taste the steel
Of brave Ulysses' shaft, whom in that house
He had so oft dishonour'd, and had urged
So oft all others to the like offence.
Amidst them then the sacred might arose
Of young Telemachus, who thus began.
Saturnian Jove questionless hath deprived
Me of all reason. My own mother, famed
For wisdom as she is, makes known to all
Her purpose to abandon this abode
And follow a new mate, while heedless I
Trifle and laugh as I were still a child.
But come, ye suitors! since the prize is such,
A woman, like to whom none can be found
This day in all Achaia; on the shores
Of sacred Pylus; in the cities proud
Of Argos or Mycenæ; or even here
In Ithaca; or yet within the walls
Of black Epirus; and since this yourselves
Know also, wherefore should I speak her praise?
Come then, delay not, waste not time in vain
Excuses, turn not from the proof, but bend

The bow, that thus the issue may be known.
I also will, myself, that task essay;
And should I bend the bow, and pass the rings,
Then shall not my illustrious mother leave
Her son forlorn, forsaking this abode
To follow a new spouse, while I remain
Disconsolate, although of age to bear,
Successful as my sire, the prize away.
So saying, he started from his seat, cast off
His purple cloak, and lay'd his sword aside,
Then fix'd, himself, the rings, furrowing the earth
By line, and opening one long trench for all,
And stamping close the glebe. Amazement seized
All present, seeing with how prompt a skill
He executed, though untaught, his task.
Then hasting to the portal, there he stood.
Thrice, struggling, he essay'd to bend the bow,
And thrice desisted, hoping still to draw
The bow-string[3] home, and shoot through all the rings.
And now the fourth time striving with full force
He had prevail'd to string it, but his sire
Forbad his eager efforts by a sign.
Then thus the royal youth to all around.
Gods! either I shall prove of little force
Hereafter, and for manly feats unapt,
Or I am yet too young, and have not strength

[3] This first attempt of Telemachus and the suitors was not an attempt to shoot, but to lodge the bow-string on the opposite horn, the bow having been released at one end, and slackened while it was laid by.

To quell the aggressor's contumely. But come—
(For ye have strength surpassing mine,) try ye
The bow, and bring this contest to an end.
He ceased, and set the bow down on the floor,
Reclining it against the pannels smooth
That lined the wall; the arrow next he placed,
Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn,
And to the seat, whence he had risen, return'd.
Then thus Eupithes' son, Antinoüs spake.
My friends! come forth successive from the right[4],
Where he who ministers the cup begins.
So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.
Then, first, Leiodes, Œnop's son, arose.
He was their soothsayer, and ever sat
Beside the beaker, inmost of them all.
To him alone of all, licentious deeds
Were odious, and with indignation fired,
He witness'd the excesses of the rest.
He then took foremost up the shaft and bow,
And, station'd at the portal, strove to bend
But bent it not, fatiguing, first, his hands
Delicate and uncustom'd to the toil.
He ceased, and the assembly thus bespake.
My friends, I speed not; let another try;
For many Princes shall this bow of life
Bereave, since death more eligible seems,
Far more, than loss of her, for whom we meet

[4] Antinoüs prescribes to them this manner of rising to the trial for the good omen's sake, the left hand being held unpropitious.

Continual here, expecting still the prize.
Some suitor haply at this moment, hopes
That he shall wed whom long he hath desired,
Ulysses' wife, Penelope; let him
Essay the bow, and trial made, address
His spousal offers to some other fair
Among the long-stoled Princesses of Greece,
This Princess leaving his, whose proffer'd gifts
Shall please her most, and whom the Fates ordain.
He said, and set the bow down on the floor,
Reclining it against the pannels smooth
That lined the wall; the arrow, next, he placed,
Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn,
And to the seat whence he had risen return'd.
Then him Antinoüs, angry, thus reproved.
What word, Leiodes, grating to our ears
Hath 'scaped thy lips? I hear it with disdain.
Shall this bow fatal prove to many a Prince,
Because thou hast thyself too feeble proved
To bend it? no. Thou wast not born to bend
The unpliant bow, or to direct the shaft,
But here are nobler who shall soon prevail.
He said, and to Melanthius gave command,
The goat-herd. Hence, Melanthius, kindle fire;
Beside it place, with fleeces spread, a form
Of length commodious; from within procure
A large round cake of suet next, with which
When we have chafed and suppled the tough bow
Before the fire, we will again essay
To bend it, and decide the doubtful strife.

He ended, and Melanthius, kindling fire,
Beside it placed, with fleeces spread, a form
Of length commodious; next he brought a cake
Ample and round of suet from within,
With which they chafed the bow, then tried again
To bend, but bent it not; superior strength
To theirs that task required. Yet two, the rest
In force surpassing, made no trial yet,
Antinoüs, and Eurymachus the brave.
Then went the herdsman and the swine-herd forth
Together; after whom, the glorious Chief
Himself the house left also, and when all
Without the court had met, with gentle speech
Ulysses, then the faithful pair address'd.
Herdsman! and thou, Eumæus! shall I keep
A certain secret close, or shall I speak
Outright? my spirit prompts me, and I will.
What welcome should Ulysses at your hands
Receive, arriving suddenly at home,
Some God his guide? would ye the suitors aid,
Or would ye aid Ulysses? answer true.
Then thus the chief intendant of his herds.
Would Jove but grant me my desire, to see
Once more the Hero, and would some kind Power
Restore him, I would show thee soon an arm
Strenuous to serve him, and a dauntless heart.
Eumæus also fervently implored
The Gods in prayer, that they would render back
Ulysses to his home. He then convinced
Of their unfeigning honesty, began.

Behold him! I am he myself, arrived
After long sufferings in the twentieth year!
I know how welcome to yourselves alone
Of all my train I come, for I have heard
None others praying for my safe return.
I therefore tell you truth; should heaven subdue
The suitors under me, ye shall receive
Each at my hands a bride, with lands and house
Near to my own, and ye shall be thenceforth
Dear friends and brothers of the Prince my son.
Lo! also this indisputable proof
That ye may know and trust me.. View it here.
It is the scar which in Parnassus erst
(Where with the sons I hunted of renown'd
Autolycus,) I from a boar received.
So saying, he stripp'd his tatters, and unveil'd
The whole broad scar; then soon as they had seen
And surely recognized the mark, each cast
His arms around Ulysses, wept, embraced
And press'd him to his bosom, kissing oft
His brows and shoulders, who as oft their hands
And foreheads kiss'd, nor had the setting sun
Beheld them satisfied, but that himself
Ulysses thus admonished them, and said.
Cease now from tears, lest any, coming forth,
Mark and report them to our foes within.
Now to the hall again, but one by one,
Not all at once, I foremost, then yourselves,
And this shall be the sign. Full well I know
That all unanimous, they will oppose

Delivery of the bow and shafts to me;
But thou, (proceeding with it to my seat)
Eumæus, noble friend! shalt give the bow
Into my grasp; then bid the women close
The massy doors, and should they hear a groan
Or other noise made by the Princes shut
Within the hall, let none set step abroad,
But all work silent. Be the palace-door
Thy charge, my good Philœtius! key it fast
Without a moment's pause, and fix the brace[5].
He ended, and returning to the hall,
Resumed his seat; nor stay'd his servants long
Without, but follow'd their illustrious Lord.
Eurymachus was busily employ'd
Turning the bow, and chafing it before
The sprightly blaze, but after all could find
No power to bend it. Disappointment wrung
A groan from his proud heart, and thus he said.
Alas! not only for myself I grieve,
But grieve for all. Nor though I mourn the loss
Of such a bride, mourn I that loss alone,
(For lovely Greecians may be found no few
In Ithaca, and in the neighbour isles,)
But should we so inferior prove at last
To brave Ulysses, that no force of ours
Can bend his bow, we are for ever shamed.
To whom Antinoüs, thus, Eupithes' son.

[5] The δεσμὸς seems to have been a strap designed to close the only aperture by which the bolt could be displaced, and the door opened.

Not so; (as even thou art well-assured
Thyself, Eurymachus!) but Phœbus claims
This day his own. Who then, on such a day,
Would strive to bend it? Let it rather rest.
And should we leave the rings where now they stand,
I trust that none entering Ulysses' house
Will dare displace them. Cup-bearer, attend!
Serve all with wine, that, first, libation made,
We may religiously lay down the bow.
Command ye too Melanthius, that he drive
Hither the fairest goats of all his flocks
At dawn of day, that burning first the thighs
To the ethereal archer, we may make
New trial, and decide at length the strife.
So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.
The heralds then pour'd water on their hands,
While youths crown'd high the goblets which they bore
From right to left, distributing to all.
When each had made libation, and had drunk
Till well sufficed, then, artful to effect
His shrewd designs, Ulysses thus began.
Hear, O ye suitors of the illustrious Queen,
My bosom's dictates. But I shall entreat
Chiefly Eurymachus and the godlike youth
Antinoüs, whose advice is wisely given.
Tamper no longer with the bow, but leave
The matter with the Gods, who shall decide
The strife to-morrow, favouring whom they will.
Meantime, grant *me* the polish'd bow, that I
May trial make among you of my force,

If I retain it still in like degree
As erst, or whether wandering and defect
Of nourishment have worn it all away.
He said, whom they with indignation heard
Extreme, alarm'd lest he should bend the bow,
And sternly thus Antinoüs replied.
Desperate vagabond! ah wretch deprived
Of reason utterly! art not content?
Esteem'st it not distinction proud enough
To feast with us the nobles of the land?
None robs thee of thy share, thou witnessest
Our whole discourse, which, save thyself alone,
No needy vagrant is allow'd to hear.
Thou art befool'd by wine, as many have been,
Wide-throated drinkers, unrestrain'd by rule.
Wine in the mansion of the mighty Chief
Pirithoüs, made the valiant Centaur mad
Eurytion, at the Lapithæan[6] feast.
He drank to drunkenness, and being drunk,
Committed great enormities beneath
Pirithoüs' roof, and such as fill'd with rage
The Hero-guests, who therefore by his feet
Dragg'd him right through the vestibule, amerced
Of nose and ears, and he departed thence
Provoked to frenzy by that foul disgrace,

[6] When Pirithoüs, one of the Lapithæ, married Hippodamia, daughter of Adrastus, he invited the Centaurs to the wedding. The Centaurs, intoxicated with wine, attempted to ravish the wives of the Lapithæ, who, in resentment of that insult, slew them.

Diligence to thy maidens; for the bow
Is man's concern alone, and shall be mine
Especially, since I am master here.
She heard astonish'd, and the prudent speech
Reposing of her son deep in her heart,
Withdrew; then mounting with her female train
To her superior chamber, there she wept
Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed
With balmy dews of sleep her weary lids.
And now the noble swine-herd bore the bow
Toward Ulysses, but with one voice all
The suitors, clamorous, reproved the deed,
Of whom a youth thus insolent exclaim'd.
Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither bear'st the bow,
Delirious wretch? the hounds that thou hast train'd
Shall eat thee at thy solitary home
Ere long, let but Apollo prove, at last,
Propitious to us, and the Powers of heaven.
So they, whom hearing he replaced the bow
Where erst he stood, terrified at the sound
Of such loud menaces; on the other side
Telemachus as loud assail'd his ear.
Friend! forward with the bow; or soon repent
That thou obey'dst the many. I will else
With huge stones drive thee, younger as I am,
Back to the field. My strength surpasses thine.
I would to heaven that I in force excell'd
As far, and prowess, every suitor here!
So would I soon give rude dismission hence
To some, who live but to imagine harm.

With him whose wife they seek! to bend his bow
Pass'd all their power, yet this poor vagabond,
Arriving from what country none can tell,
Bent it with ease, and shot through all the rings.
So will they speak, and so shall we be shamed.
Then answer thus Penelope return'd.
No fair report, Eurymachus, attends
Their names or can, who, riotous as ye,
The house dishonour and consume the wealth
Of such a Chief. Why shame ye thus *yourselves?*
The guest is of athletic frame, well form'd,
And large of limb! he boasts him also sprung
From noble ancestry. Come then—consent—
Give him the bow, that we may see the proof;
For thus I say, and thus will I perform;
Sure as he bends it, and Apollo gives
To him that glory, tunic fair and cloak
Shall be his meed from me, a javelin keen
To guard him against men and dogs, a sword
Of double edge, and sandals for his feet,
And I will send him whither most he would.
Her answer'd then prudent Telemachus.
Mother—the bow is mine; and save myself,
No Greek hath right to give it, or refuse.
None who in rock-bound Ithaca possess
Dominion, none in the steed-pastured isles
Of Elis, if I chose to make the bow
His own for ever, should that choice controul.
But thou into the house repairing, ply
Spindle and loom, thy province, and enjoin

Diligence to thy maidens; for the bow
Is man's concern alone, and shall be mine
Especially, since I am master here.
She heard astonish'd, and the prudent speech
Reposing of her son deep in her heart,
Withdrew; then mounting with her female train
To her superior chamber, there she wept
Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed
With balmy dews of sleep her weary lids.
And now the noble swine-herd bore the bow
Toward Ulysses, but with one voice all
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Of whom a youth thus insolent exclaim'd.
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Ere long, let but Apollo prove, at last,
Propitious to us, and the Powers of heaven.
So they, whom hearing he replaced the bow
Where erst he stood, terrified at the sound
Of such loud menaces; on the other side
Telemachus as loud assail'd his ear.
Friend! forward with the bow; or soon repent
That thou obey'dst the many. I will else
With huge stones drive thee, younger as I am,
Back to the field. My strength surpasses thine.
I would to heaven that I in force excell'd
As far, and prowess, every suitor here!
So would I soon give rude dismission hence
To some, who live but to imagine harm.

He ceased, whose words the suitors laughing heard,
And for their sake, in part their wrath resign'd
Against Telemachus; then through the hall
Eumæus bore, and to Ulysses' hand
Consign'd the bow; next summoning abroad
The ancient nurse, he gave her thus in charge.
It is the pleasure of Telemachus,
Sage Euryclea! that thou key secure
The doors; and should ye hear perchance a groan
Or other noise made by the Princes shut
Within the hall, let none look curious forth,
But each in quietness pursue her work.
So he; nor flew his words useless away,
But she incontinent shut fast the doors.
Then noiseless sprang Philœtius forth, who closed
The portals also of the palace-court.
A ship-rope of Ægyptian reed, it chanced,
Lay in the vestibule; with that he braced
The doors securely, and re-entering fill'd
Again his seat, but watchful eyed his Lord.
He now assaying with his hand the bow,
Made curious trial of it every way,
And turn'd it on all sides, lest haply worms
Had in its master's absence drill'd the horn.
Then thus a suitor to his next remark'd.
He hath an eye methinks exactly skill'd
In bows, and steals them; or perhaps at home
Hath such himself, or feels a strong desire
To make them; so inquisitive the rogue
Adept in mischief, shifts it to and fro!

To whom another insolent replied.
I wish him like prosperity in all
His efforts, as attends his effort made
On this same bow, which he shall never bend.
So they; but when the wary Hero wise
Had made his hand familiar with the bow
Poising it and examining—at once—
As when in harp and song adept, a bard
Unlabouring strains the chord to a new lyre,
The twisted entrails of a sheep below
With fingers nice inserting, and above,
With such facility Ulysses bent
His own huge bow, and with his right hand play'd
The nerve, which in its quick vibration sang
Clear as the swallow's voice. Keen anguish seized
The suitors, wan grew every cheek, and Jove
Gave him his rolling thunder for a sign.
That omen, granted to him by the son
Of wily Saturn, with delight he heard.
He took a shaft that at the table side
Lay ready drawn; but in his quiver's womb
The rest yet slept, by those Achaians proud
To be, ere long, experienced. True he lodged
The arrow on the centre of the bow,
And, occupying still his seat, drew home
Nerve and notch'd arrow-head; with steadfast sight
He aim'd and sent it; right through all the rings
From first to last the steel-charged weapon flew
Issuing beyond, and to his son he spake.
Thou need'st not blush, young Prince, to have received

A guest like me; neither my arrow swerved,
Nor labour'd I long time to draw the bow;
My strength is unimpair'd, not such as these
In scorn affirm it. But the waning day
Calls us to supper, [7]after which succeeds
Jocund variety, the song, the harp,
With all that heightens and adorns the feast.
He said, and with his brows gave him the sign.
At once the son of the illustrious Chief
Slung his keen faulchion, grasp'd his spear, and stood
Arm'd bright for battle at his father's side.

[7] This is an instance of the Σαρδανιον μαλα τοιον mentioned in Book XX.; such as, perhaps, could not be easily paralleled. I question if there be a passage, either in ancient or modern tragedy, so truly terrible as this seeming levity of Ulysses, in the moment when he was going to begin the slaughter.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXII.

ARGUMENT OF THE TWENTY-SECOND BOOK.

Ulysses, with some little assistance from Telemachus, Eumæus, and Philœtius, slays all the suitors, and twelve of the female servants who had allowed themselves in illicit intercourse with them, are hanged. Melanthius also is punished with miserable mutilation.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXII.

THEN, girding up his rags, Ulysses sprang
With bow and full-charged quiver to the door;
Loose on the broad stone at his feet he pour'd
His arrows, and the suitors thus bespake.
This prize, though difficult, hath been atchieved.
Now for another mark which never man
Struck yet, but I will strike it if I may,
And if Apollo make that glory mine.
He said, and at Antinoüs aimed direct
A bitter shaft; he, purposing to drink,
Both hands advanced toward the golden cup
Twin-ear'd, nor aught suspected death so nigh.
For who, at the full banquet, could suspect
That any single guest, however brave,
Should plan his death, and execute the blow?
Yet him Ulysses with an arrow pierced
Full in the throat, and through his neck behind
Started the glittering point. Aslant he droop'd;

Down fell the goblet, through his nostrils flew
The spouted blood, and spurning with his foot
The board, he spread his viands in the dust.
Confusion, when they saw Antinoüs fall'n,
Seized all the suitors; from the thrones they sprang,
Flew every way, and on all sides explored
The palace-walls, but neither sturdy lance
As erst, nor buckler could they there discern.
Then, furious, to Ulysses thus they spake.
Thy arrow, stranger, was ill-aim'd; a man
Is no just mark. Thou never shalt dispute
Prize more. Inevitable death is thine.
For thou hast slain a Prince noblest of all
In Ithaca, and shalt be vultures' food.
Various their judgments were, but none believed
That he had slain him wittingly, nor saw
The infatuate men fate hovering o'er them all.
Then thus Ulysses, louring dark, replied.
O dogs! not fearing aught my safe return
From Ilium, ye have shorn my substance close,
Lain with my women forcibly, and sought,
While yet I lived, to make my consort yours,
Heedless of the inhabitants of heaven
Alike, and of the just revenge of man.
But death is on the wing; death for you all.
He said; their cheeks all faded at the sound,
And each with sharpen'd eyes search'd every nook
For an escape from his impending doom,
Till thus, alone, Eurymachus replied.
If thou indeed art he, the mighty Chief

Of Ithaca return'd, thou hast rehearsed
With truth the crimes committed by the Greeks
Frequent, both in thy house and in thy field.
But he, already, who was cause of all,
Lies slain, Antinoüs; he thy palace fill'd
With outrage, not solicitous so much
To win the fair Penelope, but thoughts
Far different framing, which Saturnian Jove
Hath baffled all; to rule himself supreme
In noble Ithaca, when he had kill'd
By an insidious stratagem thy son.
But he is slain. Now therefore, spare thy own,
Thy people; public reparation due
Shall sure be thine, and to appease thy wrath
For all the waste that, eating, drinking here
We have committed, we will yield thee, each,
Full twenty beeves, gold paying thee beside
And brass, till joy shall fill thee at the sight,
However just thine anger was before.
  To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.
Eurymachus, would ye contribute each
His whole inheritance, and other sums
Still add beside, ye should not, even so,
These hands of mine bribe to abstain from blood,
Till every suitor suffer for his wrong.
Ye have your choice. Fight with me, or escape
(Whoever may) the terrours of his fate,
But ye all perish, if my thought be true.
  He ended, they with trembling knees and hearts
All heard, whom thus Eurymachus address'd.

To your defence, my friends! for respite none
Will he to his victorious hands afford,
But arm'd with bow and quiver, will dispatch
Shafts from the door till he have slain us all.
Therefore to arms—draw each his sword—oppose
The tables to his shafts, and all at once
Rush on him; that dislodging him at least
From portal and from threshold, we may give
The city on all sides a loud alarm,
So shall this archer soon have shot his last.
Thus saying, he drew his brazen faulchion keen
Of double edge, and with a dreadful cry
Sprang on him; but Ulysses with a shaft
In that same moment through his bosom driven
Transfix'd his liver, and down dropp'd his sword.
He, staggering around his table, fell
Convolved in agonies, and overturn'd
Both food and wine; his forehead smote the floor;
Woe fill'd his heart, and spurning with his heels
His vacant seat, he shook it till he died.
Then with his faulchion drawn, Amphinomus
Advanced to drive Ulysses from the door,
And fierce was his assault; but, from behind,
Telemachus between his shoulders fix'd
A brazen lance, and urged it through his breast.
Full on his front, with hideous sound, he fell.
Leaving the weapon planted in his spine
Back flew Telemachus, lest had he stood
Drawing it forth, some enemy, perchance,
Should either pierce him with a sudden thrust

Oblique, or hew him with a downright edge.
Swift, therefore, to his father's side he ran,
Whom reaching, in wing'd accents thus he said.
My father! I will now bring thee a shield,
An helmet, and two spears: I will enclose
Myself in armour also, and will give
Both to the herdsmen and Eumæus arms
Expedient now, and needful for us all.
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
Run; fetch them, while I yet have arrows left,
Lest, single, I be justled from the door.
He said, and at his word, forth went the Prince,
Seeking the chamber where he had secured
The armour. Thence he took four shields, eight spears,
With four hair-crested helmets, charged with which
He hasted to his father's side again,
And, arming first himself, furnish'd with arms
His two attendants. Then, all clad alike
In splendid brass, beside the dauntless Chief
Ulysses, his auxiliars firm they stood.
He while a single arrow unemploy'd
Lay at his foot, right-aiming, ever pierced
Some suitor through, and heaps on heaps they fell.
But when his arrows fail'd the royal Chief,
His bow reclining at the portal's side
Against the palace-wall, he slung himself
A four-fold buckler on his arm, he fix'd
A casque whose crest waved awful o'er his brows
On his illustrious head, and fill'd his gripe
With two stout spears, well-headed both with brass.

There was a certain postern[1] in the wall
At the gate-side, the customary pass
Into a narrow street, but barr'd secure.
Ulysses bade his faithful swine-herd watch
That egress, station'd near it, for it own'd
One sole approach; then Agelaüs loud
Exhorting all the suitors, thus exclaim'd.
Oh friends! will none, ascending to the door
Of yonder postern, summon to our aid
The populace, and spread a wide alarm?
So shall this archer soon have shot his last.
To whom the keeper of the goats replied
Melanthius. Agelaüs! Prince renown'd!
That may not be. The postern and the gate[2]
Neighbour too near each other, and to force
The narrow egress were a vain attempt;
One valiant man might thence repulse us all.
But come—myself will furnish you with arms
Fetch'd from above; for there, as I suppose,
(And not elsewhere) Ulysses, and his son
Have hidden them, and there they shall be found.
So spake Melanthius, and ascending sought

[1] If the ancients found it difficult to ascertain clearly the situation of this ορσοθυρη, well may we. The Translator has given it the position which to him appeared most probable.—There seem to have been two of these posterns, one leading to a part from which the town might be alarmed, the other to the chamber to which Telemachus went for armour. There was one, perhaps, on each side of the portal, and they appear to have been at some height above the floor.

[2] At which Ulysses stood.

Ulysses' chambers through the winding stairs
And galleries of the house. Twelve bucklers thence
He took, as many spears, and helmets bright
As many, shagg'd with hair, then swift return'd
And gave them to his friends. Trembled the heart
Of brave Ulysses, and his knees, at sight
Of his opposers putting armour on,
And shaking each his spear; arduous indeed
Now seem'd his task, and in wing'd accents brief
Thus to his son Telemachus he spake.
  Either some woman of our train contrives
Hard battle for us, furnishing with arms
The suitors, or Melanthius arms them all.
  Him answer'd then Telemachus discrete.
Father, this fault was mine, and be it charged
On none beside; I left the chamber-door
Unbarr'd, which, more attentive than myself,
Their spy perceived. But haste, Eumæus, shut
The chamber-door, observing well, the while,
If any woman of our train have done
This deed, or whether, as I more suspect,
Melanthius, Dolius' son, have given them arms.
  Thus mutual they conferr'd; meantime, again
Melanthius to the chamber flew in quest
Of other arms. Eumæus, as he went,
Mark'd him, and to Ulysses thus he spake.
  Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
Behold, the traitor, whom ourselves supposed,
Seeks yet again the chamber! Tell me plain,
Shall I, should I superior prove in force,

Slay him, or shall I drag him thence to thee,
That he may suffer at thy hands the doom
Due to his treasons perpetrated oft
Against thee, here, even in thy own house?
Then answer thus Ulysses shrewd return'd.
I, with Telemachus, will here immew
The lordly suitors close, rage as they may.
Ye two, the while, bind fast Melanthius' hands
And feet behind his back, then cast him bound
Into the chamber, and (the door secured)
Pass underneath his arms a double chain,
And by a pillar's top weigh him aloft
Till he approach the rafters, there to endure,
Living long time, the miseries he hath earn'd.
He spake; they prompt obey'd; together both
They sought the chamber, whom the wretch within
Heard not, exploring every nook for arms.
They watching stood the door, from which, at length,
Forth came Melanthius, bearing in one hand
A casque, and in the other a broad shield
Time-worn and chapp'd with drought, which in his youth
Warlike Laertes had been wont to bear.
Long time neglected it had lain, till age
Had loosed the sutures of its bands. At once
Both springing on him, seized and drew him in
Forcibly by his locks, then cast him down
Prone on the pavement, trembling at his fate.
With painful stricture of the cord his hands
They bound and feet together at his back,

As their illustrious master had enjoin'd,
Then weigh'd him with a double chain aloft,
By a tall pillar to the palace-roof,
And thus, deriding him, Eumæus spake.
Now, good Melanthius, on that fleecy bed
Reclined, as well befits thee, thou wilt watch
All night, nor when the golden dawn forsakes
The ocean stream, will she escape thine eye,
But thou wilt duly to the palace drive
The fattest goats, a banquet for thy friends.
So saying, he left him in his dreadful sling.
Then arming both, and barring fast the door,
They sought brave Laertiades again.
And now, courageous at the portal stood
Those four, by numbers in the interior house
Opposed of adversaries fierce in arms,
When Pallas, in the form and with the voice
Approach'd of Mentor, whom Laertes' son
Beheld, and joyful at the sight, exclaim'd.
Help, Mentor! help—now recollect a friend
And benefactor, born when thou wast born.
So he, not unsuspicious that he saw
Pallas, the heroine of heaven. Meantime
The suitors fill'd with menaces the dome,
And Agelaüs first, Damastor's son,
In accents harsh rebuked the Goddess thus.
Beware, oh Mentor! that he lure thee not
To oppose the suitors and to aid himself,
For thus will we. Ulysses and his son
Both slain, in vengeance of thy purposed deeds

Against us, we will slay *thee* next, and thou
With thy own head shalt satisfy the wrong.
Your force thus quell'd in battle, all thy wealth
Whether in house or field, mingled with his,
We will confiscate, neither will we leave
Or son of thine, or daughter in thy house
Alive, nor shall thy virtuous consort more
Within the walls of Ithaca be seen.
He ended, and his words with wrath inflamed
Minerva's heart the more; incensed, she turn'd
Toward Ulysses, whom she thus reproved.
Thou neither own'st the courage nor the force,
Ulysses now, which nine whole years thou showd'st
At Ilium, waging battle obstinate
For high-born Helen, and in horrid fight
Destroying multitudes, till thy advice
At last lay'd Priam's bulwark'd city low.
Why, in possession of thy proper home
And substance, mourn'st thou want of power to oppose
The suitors? Stand beside me, mark my deeds,
And thou shalt own Mentor Alcimides
A valiant friend, and mindful of thy love.
She spake; nor made she victory as yet
Entire his own, proving the valour, first,
Both of the sire and of his glorious son,
But, springing in a swallow's form aloft,
Perch'd on a rafter of the splendid roof.
Then, Agelaüs animated loud
The suitors, whom Eurynomus also roused,
Amphimedon, and Demoptolemus,

And Polyctorides, Pisander named,
And Polybus the brave; for noblest far
Of all the suitor chiefs who now survived
And fought for life were these. The bow had quell'd
And shafts, in quick succession sent, the rest.
Then Agelaüs thus harangued them all.
We soon shall tame, O friends, this warrior's might,
Whom Mentor, after all his airy vaunts
Hath left, and at the portal now remain
Themselves alone. Dismiss not therefore, all,
Your spears together, but with six alone
Assail them first; Jove willing, we shall pierce
Ulysses, and subduing him, shall slay
With ease the rest; their force is safely scorn'd.
He ceased; and, as he bade, six hurl'd the spear
Together; but Minerva gave them all
A devious flight; [3]one struck a column, one
The planks of the broad portal, and a third
Flung right his ashen beam ponderous with brass
Against the wall. Then (every suitor's spear
Eluded) thus Ulysses gave the word—
Now friends! I counsel you that ye dismiss
Your spears at *them*, who not content with past
Enormities, thirst also for our blood.
He said, and with unerring aim all threw
Their glittering spears. Ulysses on the ground
Stretch'd Demoptolemus; Euryades
Fell by Telemachus; the swine-herd slew
Elătus, and the keeper of the beeves

[3] The deviation of three only is described, which must be understood, therefore, as instances of the ill success of all.

Pisander; in one moment all alike
Lay grinding with their teeth the dusty floor.
Back flew the suitors to the farthest wall,
On whom those valiant four advancing, each
Recover'd quick his weapon from the dead.
Then hurl'd the desperate suitors yet again
Their glittering spears, but Pallas gave to each
A frustrate course; one struck a column, one
The planks of the broad portal, and a third
Flung full his ashen beam against the wall.
Yet pierced Amphimedon the Prince's wrist,
But slightly, a skin-wound, and o'er his shield
Ctesippus reach'd the shoulder of the good
Eumæus, but his glancing weapon swift
O'erflew the mark, and fell. And now the four,
Ulysses, dauntless Hero, and his friends
All hurl'd their spears together in return.
Himself Ulysses, city-waster Chief,
Wounded Eurydamas; Ulysses' son
Amphimedon; the swine-herd Polybus;
And in his breast the keeper of the beeves
Ctesippus, glorying over whom, he cried.
  Oh son of Polytherses! whose delight
Hath been to taunt and jeer, never again
Boast foolishly, but to the Gods commit
Thy tongue, since they are mightier far than thou.
Take this—a compensation for thy pledge
Of hospitality, the huge ox-hoof,
Which while he roam'd the palace, begging alms,
Ulysses at thy bounteous hand received.
  So gloried he; then grasping still his spear,

Ulysses pierced Damastor's son, and next
Telemachus, enforcing his long beam
Sheer through his bowels and his back, transpierced
Leiocritus; he prostrate smote the floor.
Then Pallas from the lofty roof held forth
Her host-confounding Ægis o'er their heads,
Withering their souls with fear. They through the hall
Fled, scatter'd as an herd, which rapid-wing'd
The gad-fly dissipates, infester fell
Of beeves, when vernal suns shine hot and long.
[4] But, as when bow-beak'd vultures crooked-claw'd
Stoop from the mountains on the smaller fowl;
Terrified at the toils that spread the plain
The flock takes wing, they, darting from above,
Strike, seize, and slay, resistance or escape
Is none, the fowler's heart leaps with delight;
So they, pursuing through the spacious hall
The suitors, smote them on all sides, their heads
Sounded beneath the sword, with hideous groans
The palace rang, and the floor foam'd with blood.
Then flew Leiodes to Ulysses' knees,
Which clasping, in wing'd accents thus he cried.
I clasp thy knees, Ulysses! oh respect

[4] In this simile we seem to have a curious account of the ancient manner of fowling. The nets (for νέφεα is used in that sense by Aristophanes) were spread on a plain; on an adjoining rising ground were stationed they who had charge of the vultures, (such Homer calls them) which were trained to the sport. The alarm being given to the birds below, the vultures were loosed, when if any of them escaped their talons, the nets were ready to enclose. Eustathius. Dacier. Clarke.

My suit, and spare me! Never have I word
Injurious spoken, or injurious deed
Attempted 'gainst the women of thy house,
But others, so transgressing, oft forbad.
Yet they abstain'd not, and a dreadful fate
Due to their wickedness have therefore found.
But I, their soothsayer alone, must fall,
Though unoffending; such is the return
By mortals made for benefits received!

To whom Ulysses, louring-dark, replied.
Is that thy boast? Hast thou indeed for these
The seer's high office fill'd? Then doubtless oft
Thy prayer hath been that distant far might prove
The day delectable of my return,
And that my consort might thy own become
To bear thee children; wherefore thee I doom
To a dire death which thou shalt not avoid.

So saying, he caught the faulchion from the floor
Which Agelaüs had let fall, and smote
Leiodes, while he kneel'd, athwart his neck
So suddenly, that ere his tongue had ceased
To plead for life, his head was in the dust.
But Phemius, son of Terpius, bard divine,
Who, through compulsion, with his song regaled
The suitors, a like dreadful death escaped.
Fast by the postern, harp in hand, he stood,
Doubtful if, issuing, he should take his seat
Beside the altar of Hercæan[5] Jove,

[5] So called because he was worshipped within the Ἕρκος or wall that surrounded the court.

Where oft Ulysses offer'd, and his sire,
Fat thighs of beeves, or whether he should haste,
An earnest suppliant, to embrace his knees.
That course, at length, most pleased him; then between
The beaker and an argent studded throne
He grounded his sweet lyre, and seizing fast
The Hero's knees, him suppliant thus address'd.
I clasp thy knees, Ulysses! oh respect
My suit, and spare me. Thou shalt not escape
Regret thyself hereafter, if thou slay
Me, charmer of the woes of Gods and men.
Self-taught am I, and treasure in my mind
Themes of all argument from heaven inspired,
And I can sing to thee as to a God.
Ah then behead me not! Put even the wish
Far from thee! for thy own beloved son
Can witness, that not drawn by choice, or driven
By stress of want, resorting to thine house
I have regaled these revellers so oft,
But under force of mightier far than I.
So he; whose words soon as the sacred might
Heard of Telemachus, approaching quick
His father, thus humane he interposed.
Hold—Harm not with the vengeful faulchion's edge
This blameless man; and we will also spare
Medon the herald, who hath ever been
A watchful guardian of my boyish years,
Unless Philœtius have already slain him,
Or else Eumæus, or thyself, perchance,
Unconscious, in the tumult of our foes.

He spake, whom Medon hearing (for he lay
Beneath a throne, and in a new-stript hide
Enfolded, trembling with the dread of death,)
Sprang from his hiding-place, and casting off
The skin, flew to Telemachus, embraced
His knees, and in wing'd accents thus exclaim'd.
Prince! I am here—oh, pity me! repress
Thine own, and pacify thy father's wrath,
That he destroy not me, through fierce revenge
Of their iniquities who have consumed
His wealth, and in their folly scorn'd his son.
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied,
Smiling complacent. Fear not; my own son
Hath pleaded for thee. Therefore (taught thyself
That truth) teach others the superior worth
Of benefits with injuries compared.
But go ye forth, thou and the sacred bard,
That ye may sit distant in yonder court
From all this carnage, while I give command
Myself concerning it, to those within.
He ceased; they going forth, took each his seat
Beside Jove's altar, but with careful looks
Suspicious, dreading without cease the sword.
Meantime Ulysses search'd his hall in quest
Of living foes, if any still survived
Unpunish'd; but he found them all alike
Weltering in dust and blood; numerous they lay
Like fishes when they strew the sinuous shore
Of Ocean, from the grey gulf drawn aground
In nets of many a mesh; they on the sands

Lie spread, athirst for the salt wave, till hot
The gazing sun dries all their life away;
So lay the suitors heap'd, and thus at length
The prudent Chief gave order to his son.
Telemachus; bid Euryclea come
Quickly, the nurse, to whom I would impart
The purpose which now occupies me most.
He said; obedient to his sire, the Prince
Smote on the door, and summon'd loud the nurse.
Arise, thou ancient governess of all
Our female menials, and come forth; attend
My father; he hath somewhat for thine ear.
So he; nor flew his words useless away,
For throwing wide the portal, forth she came,
And by Telemachus conducted, found
Ere long Ulysses amid all the slain,
With blood defiled and dust; dread he appear'd
As from the pastured ox newly-devour'd
The lion stalking back; his ample chest
With gory drops and his broad cheeks are hung,
Tremendous spectacle! such seem'd the Chief,
Blood-stain'd all over. She the carnage spread
On all sides seeing, and the pools of blood,
Felt impulse forcible to publish loud
That wond'rous triumph; but her lord repress'd
The shout of rapture ere it burst abroad,
And in wing'd accents thus his will enforced.
Silent exult, O ancient matron dear!
Shout not, be still. Unholy is the voice
Of loud thanksgiving over slaughter'd men.

Their own atrocious deeds and the Gods' will
Have slain all these; for whether noble guest
Arrived or base, they scoff'd at all alike,
And for their wickedness have therefore died.
But say; of my domestic women, who
Have scorn'd me, and whom find'st thou innocent?
To whom good Euryclea thus replied.
My son! I will declare the truth; thou keep'st
Female domestics fifty in thy house,
Whom we have made intelligent to comb
The fleece, and to perform whatever task.
Of these, twice six have overpass'd the bounds
Of modesty, respecting neither me,
Nor yet the Queen; and thy own son, adult
So lately, no permission had from her
To regulate the women of her train.
But I am gone, I fly with what hath pass'd
To the Queen's ear, who nought suspects, so sound
She sleeps, by some divinity composed.
Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Hush, and disturb her not. Go. Summon first
Those wantons, who have long deserved to die.
He ceased; then issued forth the ancient dame
To summon those bad women, and, meantime,
Calling his son, Philœtius, and Eumæus,
Ulysses in wing'd accents thus began.
Bestir ye, and remove the dead; command
Those women also to your help; then cleanse
With bibulous sponges and with water all
The seats and tables; when ye shall have thus

Set all in order, lead those women forth,
And in the centre of the spacious court,
Between the scullery and the outer-wall
Smite them with your broad faulchions till they lose
In death the memory of their secret loves
Indulged with wretches lawless as themselves.
He ended, and the damsels came at once
All forth, lamenting, and with tepid tears
Showering the ground; with mutual labour, first,
Bearing the bodies forth into the court,
They lodged them in the portico; meantime
Ulysses stern enjoin'd them haste, and urged
By sad necessity, they bore all out.
With sponges and with water next they cleansed
The thrones and tables, while Telemachus
Besom'd the floor, Eumæus in that work
Aiding him and the keeper of the beeves,
And those twelve damsels bearing forth the soil.
Thus order given to all within, they next
Led forth the women, whom they shut between
The scullery and the outer-wall in close
Durance, from which no prisoner could escape,
And thus Telemachus discrete began.
An honourable death is not for these
By my advice, who have so often heap'd
Reproach on mine and on my mother's head,
And held lewd commerce with the suitor-train.
He said, and noosing a strong galley-rope
To an huge column, led the cord around
The spacious dome, suspended so aloft

That none with quivering feet might reach the floor.
As when a flight of doves entering the copse,
Or broad-wing'd thrushes, strike against the net
Within, ill rest entangled there they find,
So they, suspended by the neck, expired
All in one line together. Death abhorr'd!
With restless feet awhile they beat the air,
Then ceased. And now through vestibule and hall
They led Melanthius forth. With ruthless steel
They pared away his ears and nose, pluck'd forth
His parts of shame, destined to feed the dogs,
And still indignant, lopp'd his hands and feet.
Then, laving each his feet and hands, they sought
Again Ulysses; all their work was done,
And thus the Chief to Euryclea spake.
Bright blast-averting sulphur, nurse, bring fire!
That I may fumigate my walls; then bid
Penelope with her attendants down,
And summon all the women of her train.
But Euryclea thus his nurse replied.
My son! thou hast well said; yet will I first
Serve thee with vest and mantle. Stand not here
In thy own palace cloathed with tatters foul
And beggarly,—she will abhor the sight.
Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Not so. Bring fire for fumigation first.
He said; nor Euryclea his loved nurse
Longer delay'd, but sulphur brought and fire,
When he with purifying steams himself
Visited every part, the banquet-room,

The vestibule, the court. Ranging meantime
His house magnificent, the matron call'd
The women to attend their Lord in haste,
And they attended, bearing each a torch.
Then gather'd they around him all, sincere
Welcoming his return; with close embrace
Enfolding him, each kiss'd his brows, and each
His shoulders, and his hands lock'd fast in hers.
He, irresistible the impulse felt
To sigh and weep, well recognizing all.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIII.

ARGUMENT OF THE TWENTY-THIRD BOOK.

Ulysses, with some difficulty, convinces Penelope of his identity, who, at length, overcome by force of evidence, receives him to her arms with transport. He entertains her with a recital of his adventures, and in his narration the principal events of the poem are recapitulated. In the morning, Ulysses, Telemachus, the herdsman and the swine-herd, depart into the country.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIII.

And now, with exultation loud the nurse
Again ascended, eager to apprize
The Queen of her Ulysses' safe return;
Joy braced her knees, with nimbleness of youth
She stepp'd, and at her ear, her thus bespake.
  Arise, Penelope! dear daughter, see
With thy own eyes thy daily wish fulfill'd.
Ulysses is arrived; hath reach'd at last
His native home, and all those suitors proud
Hath slaughter'd, who his family distress'd,
His substance wasted, and controul'd his son.
  To whom Penelope discrete replied.
Dear nurse! the Gods have surely taken away
Thy judgement; they transform the wise to fools,
And fools conduct to wisdom, and have marr'd
Thy intellect, who wast discrete before.
Why wilt thou mock me, wretched as I am,
With tales extravagant? and why disturb
Those slumbers sweet that seal'd so fast mine eyes?
For such sweet slumbers have I never known

Since my Ulysses on his voyage sail'd
To that bad city never to be named.
Down instant to thy place again—begone—
For had another of my maidens dared
Disturb my sleep with tidings wild as these,
I had dismiss'd her down into the house
More roughly; but thine age excuses *thee*.
To whom the venerable matron thus.
I mock thee not, my child; no—he is come—
Himself, Ulysses, even as I say,
That stranger, object of the scorn of all.
Telemachus well knew his sire arrived,
But prudently conceal'd the tidings, so
To ensure the more the suitors' punishment.
So Euryclea; she transported heard,
And springing from the bed, wrapp'd in her arms
The ancient woman, shedding tears of joy,
And in wing'd accents ardent thus replied.
Ah then, dear nurse, inform me! tell me true!
Hath he indeed arrived as thou declarest?
How dared he to assail alone that band
Of shameless ones, for ever swarming here?
Then Euryclea thus matron beloved.
I nothing saw or knew; but only heard
Groans of the wounded; in the interior house
We trembling sat, and every door was fast.
Thus all remain'd, till by his father sent,
Thy own son call'd me forth. Going I found
Ulysses compass'd by the slaughter'd dead.
They cover'd wide the pavement, heaps on heaps.

It would have cheer'd thy heart to have beheld
Thy husband lion-like with crimson stains
Of slaughter and of dust all dappled o'er.
Heap'd in the portal, at this moment, lie
Their bodies, and he fumigates, meantime,
The house with sulphur and with flames of fire,
And hath himself sent me to bid thee down.
Follow me then that ye may give your hearts
To gladness both, for ye have much endured;
But the event, so long your soul's desire,
Is come; himself hath to his household Gods
Alive return'd, thee and his son he finds
Unharm'd and at your home, nor hath he left
Unpunish'd one of all his enemies.
Her answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Ah dearest nurse! indulge not to excess
This dangerous triumph. Thou art well apprized
How welcome his appearance here would prove
To all, but chief to me and to his son,
Fruit of our love. But these things are not so;
Some God, resentful of their evil deeds,
And of their biting contumely severe,
Hath slain those proud; for whether noble guest
Arrived or base, alike they scoff'd at all,
And for their wickedness have therefore died.
But my Ulysses distant far, I know,
From Greece hath perish'd, and returns no more.
To whom thus Euryclea, nurse beloved.
What word, my daughter, hath escaped thy lips,
Who thus affirm'st thy husband, now within

And at his own hearth-side, for ever lost?
Canst thou be thus incredulous? Hear again—
I give thee yet proof past dispute, his scar
Imprinted by a wild-boar's ivory tusk.
Laving him I remark'd it, and desired,
Myself, to tell thee, but he, ever wise,
Compressing with both hands my lips, forbad.
Come, follow me. My life shall be the pledge.
If I deceive thee, kill me as thou wilt.
To whom Penelope discrete replied.
Ah, dearest nurse, sagacious as thou art,
Thou little know'st to scan the counsels wise
Of the eternal Gods. But let us seek
My son, however, that I may behold
The suitors dead, and him by whom they died.
So saying, she left her chamber, musing much
In her descent, whether to interrogate
Her lord apart, or whether to imprint,
At once, his hands with kisses and his brows.
O'erpassing light the portal-step of stone
She enter'd. He sat opposite, illumed
By the hearth's sprightly blaze, and close before
A pillar of the dome, waiting with eyes
Downcast, till viewing him, his noble spouse
Should speak to him; but she sat silent long,
Her faculties in mute amazement held.
By turns she rivetted her eyes on his,
And, seeing him so foul attired, by turns
She recognized him not; then spake her son
Telemachus, and her silence thus reproved.

My mother! ah my hapless and my most
Obdurate mother! wherefore thus aloof
Shunn'st thou my father, neither at his side
Sitting affectionate, nor uttering word?
Another wife lives not who could endure
Such distance from her husband new-return'd
To his own country in the twentieth year,
After much hardship; but thy heart is still
As ever, less impressible than stone.
To whom Penelope discrete replied.
I am all wonder, O my son! my soul
Is stunn'd within me; power to speak to him
Or to interrogate him have I none,
Or even to look on him; but if indeed
He be Ulysses, and have reach'd his home,
I shall believe it soon, by proof convinced
Of signs, known only to himself and me.
She said; then smiled the Hero toil-inured,
And in wing'd accents thus spake to his son.
Leave thou, Telemachus, thy mother here
To sift and prove me; she will know me soon
More certainly; she sees me ill-attired
And squalid now; therefore she shews me scorn,
And no belief hath yet that I am he.
But we have need, thou and myself, of deep
Deliberation. If a man have slain
One only citizen, who leaves behind
Few interested to avenge his death,
Yet flying he forsakes both friends and home;
But we have slain the noblest Princes far

Of Ithaca, on whom our city most
Depended; therefore, I advise thee, think!
Him, prudent, then answer'd Telemachus.
Be that thy care, my father! for report
Proclaims *thee* shrewdest of mankind, with whom
In ingenuity may none compare.
Lead thou; to follow thee shall be our part
With prompt alacrity; nor shall, I judge,
Courage be wanting to our utmost force.
Thus then replied Ulysses, ever-wise.
To me the safest counsel and the best
Seems this. First wash yourselves, and put ye on
Your tunics; bid ye next the maidens take
Their best attire, and let the bard divine
Harping melodious play a sportive dance,
That whether passenger or neighbour hear,
All may imagine nuptials held within.
So shall not loud report that we have slain
All those, alarm the city till we gain
Our woods and fields, where once arrived, such plans
We will devise, as Jove shall deign to inspire.
He spake, and all obedient in the bath
First laved themselves, then put their tunics on;
The damsels also dress'd, and the sweet bard
Harping melodious, kindled strong desire
In all of jocund song and graceful dance.
The palace under all its vaulted roof
Remurmur'd to the feet of sportive youths
And cinctured maidens, while no few abroad,
Hearing such revelry within remark'd;—

The Queen with many wooers, weds at last.
Ah fickle and unworthy fair! too frail
Always to keep inviolate the house
Of her first Lord, and wait for his return.
So spake the people; but they little knew
What had befallen. Eurynome, meantime,
With bath and unction served the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, and he saw himself attired
Royally once again in his own house.
Then Pallas over all his features shed
Superior beauty, dignified his form
With added amplitude, and pour'd his curls
Like hyacinthine flowers down from his brows.
As when some artist by Minerva made
And Vulcan, wise to execute all tasks
Ingenious, borders silver with a wreath
Of gold, accomplishing a graceful work,
Such grace the Goddess o'er his ample chest
Copious diffused, and o'er his manly brows.
He, godlike, stepping from the bath, resumed
His former seat magnificent, and sat
Opposite to the Queen, to whom he said.
Penelope! the Gods to thee have given
Of all thy sex, the most obdurate heart.
Another wife lives not who could endure
Such distance from her husband new-return'd
To his own country in the twentieth year,
After such hardship. But prepare me, nurse,
A bed, for solitary I must sleep,
Since she is iron, and feels not for me.

Him, answer'd then prudent Penelope.
I neither magnify thee, sir! nor yet
Depreciate thee, nor is my wonder such
As hurries me at once into thy arms,
Though my remembrance perfectly retains,
Such as he was, Ulysses, when he sail'd
On board his bark from Ithaca—Go, nurse,
Prepare his bed, but not within the walls
Of his own chamber built with his own hands.
Spread it without, and spread it well with warm
Mantles, with fleeces, and with richest rugs.
So spake she, [1]proving him, and, not untouch'd
With anger at that word, thus he replied.
Penelope, that order grates my ear.
Who hath displaced my bed? The task were hard
Even to an artist; other than a God
None might with ease remove it; as for man,
It might defy the stoutest in his prime
Of youth, to heave it to a different spot.
For in that bed elaborate, a sign,
A special sign consists; I was myself
The artificer; I fashion'd it alone.
Within the court a leafy olive grew
Lofty, luxuriant, pillar-like in girth.

[1] The proof consisted in this—that the bed being attached to the stump of an olive tree still rooted, was immoveable, and Ulysses having made it himself, no person present, he must needs be apprized of the impossibility of her orders, if he were indeed Ulysses; accordingly, this demonstration of his identity satisfies all her scruples.

Around this tree I built, with massy stones
Cemented close, my chamber, roof'd it o'er,
And hung the glutinated portals on.
I lopp'd the ample foliage and the boughs,
And severing near the root its solid bole,
Smooth'd all the rugged stump with skilful hand,
And wrought it to a pedestal well squared
And modell'd by the line. I wimbled, next,
The frame throughout, and from the olive-stump
Beginning, fashion'd the whole bed above
Till all was finish'd, plated o'er with gold,
With silver, and with ivory, and beneath
Close interlaced with purple cordage strong.
Such sign I give thee. But if still it stand
Unmoved, or if some other, severing sheer
The olive from its bottom, have displaced
My bed—that matter is best known to thee.
He ceased; she, conscious of the sign so plain
Given by Ulysses, heard with fluttering heart
And faultering knees that proof. Weeping she ran
Direct toward him, threw her arms around
The Hero, kiss'd his forehead, and replied.
Ah my Ulysses! pardon me—frown not—
Thou who at other times hast ever shown
Superior wisdom! all our griefs have flow'd
From the Gods' will; they envied us the bliss
Of undivided union sweet enjoy'd
Through life, from early youth to latest age.
No. Be not angry now; pardon the fault
That I embraced thee not as soon as seen,

For horror hath not ceased to overwhelm
My soul, lest some false alien should, perchance,
Beguile me, for our house draws numerous such.
Jove's daughter, Argive Helen, ne'er had given
Free entertainment to a stranger's love,
Had she foreknown that the heroic sons
Of Greece would bring her to her home again.
But heaven incited her to that offence,
Who never, else, had even in her thought
Harbour'd the foul enormity, from which
Originated even our distress.
But now, since evident thou hast described
Our bed, which never mortal yet beheld,
Ourselves except and Actoris my own
Attendant, given me when I left my home
By good Icarius, and who kept the door,
Though hard to be convinced, at last I yield.
So saying, she awaken'd in his soul
Pity and grief; and folding in his arms
His blameless consort beautiful, he wept.
Welcome as land appears to those who swim,
Whose gallant bark Neptune with rolling waves
And stormy winds hath sunk in the wide sea,
A mariner or two, perchance, escape
The foamy flood, and swimming reach the land,
Weary indeed, and with incrusted brine
All rough, but oh, how glad to climb the coast!
So welcome in her eyes Ulysses seem'd,
Around whose neck winding her snowy arms,
She clung as she would loose him never more.

Thus had they wept till rosy-finger'd morn
Had found them weeping, but Minerva check'd
Night's almost finish'd course, and held, meantime,
The golden dawn close prisoner in the Deep,
Forbidding her to lead her coursers forth,
Lampus and Phaëthon that furnish light
To all the earth, and join them to the yoke.
Then thus, Ulysses to Penelope.
My love! we have not yet attain'd the close
Of all our sufferings, but unmeasured toil
Arduous remains, which I must still atchieve.
For so the spirit of the Theban seer
Inform'd me, on that day, when to enquire
Of mine and of my people's safe return
I journey'd down to Pluto's drear abode.
But let us hence to bed, there to enjoy
Tranquil repose. My love, make no delay.
Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
Thou shalt to bed at whatsoever time
Thy soul desires, since the immortal Gods
Give thee to me and to thy home again.
But, thou hast spoken from the seer of Thebes
Of arduous toils yet unperform'd; declare
What toils? Thou wilt disclose them, as I judge,
Hereafter, and why not disclose them now?
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
Ah conversant with woe! why would'st thou learn
That tale? but I will tell it thee at large.
Thou wilt not hear with joy, nor shall myself
With joy rehearse it; for he bade me seek

City after city, bearing, as I go,
A shapely oar, till I shall find, at length,
A people who the sea know not, nor eat
Food salted; they trim galley crimson-prow'd
Have ne'er beheld, nor yet smooth shaven oar
With which the vessel wing'd scuds o'er the waves.
He gave me also this authentic sign,
Which I will tell thee. In what place soe'er
I chance to meet a traveller who shall name
The oar on my broad shoulder borne, a van[2];
He bade me, planting it on that same spot,
Worship the King of Ocean with a bull,
A ram, and a lascivious boar, then seek.
My home again, and sacrifice at home
An hecatomb to the immortal Gods
Inhabitants of the expanse above.
So shall I die, at length, the gentlest death
Remote from Ocean; it shall find me late,
In soft serenity of age, the Chief
Of a blest people.—Thus he prophesied.
Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
If heaven appoint thee in old age a lot
More tranquil, hope thence springs of thy escape
Some future day from all thy threaten'd woes.
Such was their mutual conference sweet; meantime
Eurynome and Euryclea dress'd
Their bed by light of the clear torch, and when
Dispatchful they had spread it broad and deep,

[2] See the note on the same passage, Book xi.

The ancient nurse to her own bed retired.
Then came Eurynome, to whom in trust
The chambers appertain'd, and with a torch
Conducted them to rest; she introduced
The happy pair, and went; transported they
To rites connubial intermitted long,
And now recover'd gave themselves again[3].
Meantime, the Prince, the herdsman, and the good
Eumæus giving rest each to his feet,
Ceased from the dance; they made the women cease
Also, and to their several chambers all
Within the twilight edifice repair'd.
At length with conjugal endearment both
Satiate, Ulysses tasted and his spouse
The sweets of mutual converse. She rehearsed,
Noblest of women, all her numerous woes
Beneath that roof sustain'd, while she beheld
The profligacy of the suitor-throng,
Who in their wooing had consumed his herds
And fatted flocks, and drawn his vessels dry;
While brave Ulysses, in his turn, to her
Related his successes and escapes,
And his afflictions also; he told her all;
She listen'd charm'd, nor slumber on his eyes
Fell once, or ere he had rehearsed the whole.

[3] Aristophanes the grammarian and Aristarchus chose that the Odyssey should end here; but the story is not properly concluded till the tumult occasioned by the slaughter of so many Princes being composed, Ulysses finds himself once more in peaceable possession of his country.

Beginning, he discoursed, how at the first
He conquer'd in Ciconia, and thence reach'd
The fruitful shores of the Lotophagi;
The Cyclops' deeds he told her next, and how
He well avenged on him his slaughter'd friends
Whom, pitiless, the monster had devour'd.
How to the isle of Æolus he came,
Who welcomed him and safe dismiss'd him thence,
Although not destined to regain so soon
His native land; for o'er the fishy deep
Loud tempests snatch'd him sighing back again.
How, also at Telepylus he arrived,
Town of the Læstrygonians, who destroy'd
His ships with all their mariners, his own
Except, who in his sable bark escaped.
Of guileful Circe too he spake, deep-skill'd
In various artifice, and how he reach'd
With sails and oars the squalid realms of death,
Desirous to consult the prophet there
Theban Tiresias, and how there he view'd
All his companions, and the mother bland
Who bare him, nourisher of his infant years.
How next he heard the Sirens in one strain
All chiming sweet, and how he reach'd the rocks
Erratic, Scylla and Charybdis dire,
Which none secure from injury may pass.
Then how the partners of his voyage slew
The Sun's own beeves, and how the Thunderer Jove
Hurl'd down his smoky bolts into his bark,
Depriving him at once of all his crew,

Whose dreadful fate, he yet himself escaped.
How to Ogygia's isle he came, where dwelt
The nymph Calypso, who enamour'd wish'd
To espouse him, and within her spacious grot
Detain'd, and fed, and promised him a life
Exempt for ever from the sap of age,
But him moved not. How also he arrived
After much toil, on the Phæacian coast,
Where every heart revered him as a God,
And whence, enriching him with brass and gold,
And costly raiment first, they sent him home.
At this last word, oblivious slumber sweet
Fell on him, dissipating all his cares.
Meantime, Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed,
On other thoughts intent, soon as she deem'd
Ulysses with connubial joys sufficed,
And with sweet sleep, at once from Ocean roused
The golden-axled chariot of the morn
To illumine earth. Then from his fleecy couch
The Hero sprang, and thus his spouse enjoin'd.
Oh consort dear! already we have striven
Against our lot till wearied with the toil,
My painful absence, thou with ceaseless tears
Deploring, and myself in deep distress
Withheld reluctant from my native shores
By Jove and by the other powers of heaven.
But since we have in this delightful bed
Met once again, watch thou and keep secure
All my domestic treasures, and ere long
I will replace my numerous sheep destroy'd

By those imperious suitors, and the Greeks
Shall add yet others till my folds be fill'd.
But to the woodlands go I now—to see
My noble father, who for my sake mourns
Continual; as for thee, my love, although
I know thee wise, I give thee thus in charge.
The sun no sooner shall ascend, than fame
Shall wide divulge the deed that I have done,
Slaying the suitors under my own roof.
Thou, therefore, with thy maidens sit retired
In thy own chamber at the palace-top,
Nor question ask, nor curious look abroad.
He said, and covering with his radiant arms
His shoulders, call'd Telemachus; he roused
Eumæus and the herdsman too, and bade
All take their martial weapons in their hands.
Not disobedient they, as he enjoin'd,
Put armour on, and issued from the gates
Ulysses at their head. The earth was now
Enlighten'd, but Minerva them in haste
Led forth into the fields, unseen by all.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIV.

ARGUMENT OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK.

Mercury conducts the souls of the suitors down to Ades. Ulysses discovers himself to Laertes, and quells, by the aid of Minerva, an insurrection of the people resenting the death of the suitors.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIV.

And now Cyllenian Hermes summon'd forth
The spirits of the suitors; waving wide
The golden wand of power to seal all eyes
In slumber, and to ope them wide again,
He drove them gibbering[1] down into the shades.
As when the bats within some hallow'd cave
Flit squeaking all around, for if but one
Fall from the rock, the rest all follow him,
In such connexion mutual they adhere;
So, after bounteous Mercury, the ghosts
Troop'd downward gibbering[1] all the dreary way.
The Ocean's flood and the Leucadian rock,
The Sun's gate also and the land of Dreams
They pass'd, whence next into the meads they came
Of Asphodel, by shadowy forms possess'd,
Simulars of the dead. They found the souls
Of brave Pelides there, and of his friend

Τρίζωσαι—τετριγυῖαι—
——————— the ghosts
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.
Shaksp.

Patroclus, of Antilochus renown'd,
And of the mightier Ajax, for his form
And bulk, (Achilles sole except,) of all
The sons of the Achaians most admired.
These waited on Achilles. Then appear'd
The mournful ghost of Agamemnon, son
Of Atreus, compass'd by the ghosts of all
Who shared his fate beneath Ægisthus' roof,
And him the ghost of Peleus' son bespake.
  Atrides! of all Heroes we esteem'd
Thee dearest to the Gods, for that thy sway
Extended over such a glorious host
At Ilium, scene of sorrow to the Greeks.
But Fate, whose ruthless force none may escape
Of all who breathe, pursued thee from the first.
Thou shouldst have perish'd full of honour, full
Of royalty, at Troy; so all the Greeks
Had raised thy tomb, and thou hadst then bequeath'd
Great glory to thy son; but Fate ordain'd
A death, oh how deplorable! for thee.
  To whom Atrides' spirit thus replied.
Blest son of Peleus, semblance of the Gods,
At Ilium, far from Argos, fallen! for whom
Contending, many a Trojan, many a Chief
Of Greece died also, while in eddies whelm'd
Of dust thy vastness[2] spread the plain, nor thee
The chariot aught or steed could interest more!
All day we waged the battle, nor at last

[2] ——Behemoth, biggest born of earth,
Upheaved his vastness. MILTON.

Desisted, but for tempests sent from Jove.
At length, we bore into the Greecian fleet
Thy body from the field; there first we cleansed
With tepid baths, and oil'd thy shapely corse,
Then placed thee on thy bier, while many a Greek
Around thee wept, and shore his locks for thee.
Thy mother also, hearing of thy death,
With her immortal nymphs from the abyss
Arose and came; terrible was the sound
On the salt flood; a panic seized the Greeks,
And every warrior had return'd on board
That moment, had not Nestor, antient Chief,
Illumed by long experience, interposed;
His counsels, ever wisest, wisest proved
Then also, and he thus address'd the host.
Sons of Achaia, fly not; stay, ye Greeks!
Thetis arrives with her immortal nymphs
From the abyss, to visit her dead son.
So he; and, by his admonition stay'd,
The Greeks fled not. Then all around thee stood
The daughters of the Antient of the Deep,
Mourning disconsolate; with heavenly robes
They clothed thy corse, and all the Muses nine
Deplored thee in full choir with sweetest tones
Responsive, nor one Greecian hadst thou seen
Dry-eyed, such grief the Muses moved in all.
Full seventeen days we day and night deplored
Thy death, both Gods in heaven and men below;
But on the eighteenth day, we gave thy corse
Its burning, and fat sheep around thee slew

Numerous, with many a pastured ox moon-horn'd.
We burn'd thee clothed in vesture of the Gods,
With honey and with oil feeding the flames
Abundant, while Achaia's Heroes arm'd,
Both horse and foot, encompassing thy pile,
Clash'd on their shields, and deafening was the din.
But when the fires of Vulcan had at length
Consumed thee, at the dawn we stored thy bones
In unguent and in undiluted wine;
For Thetis gave to us a golden vase
Twin-ear'd, which she profess'd to have received
From Bacchus, work divine of Vulcan's hand.
Within that vase, Achilles, treasured lie
Thine and the bones of thy departed friend
Patroclus, but a separate urn we gave
To those of brave Antilochus, who most
Of all thy friends at Ilium shared thy love
And thy respect, thy friend Patroclus slain.
Around both urns we piled a noble tomb,
(We warriors of the sacred Argive host)
On a tall promontory shooting far
Into the spacious Hellespont, that all
Who live, and who shall yet be born, may view
Thy record, even from the distant waves.
Then, by permission from the Gods obtain'd,
To the Achaian Chiefs in circus met
Thetis appointed games. I have beheld
The burial rites of many a Hero bold,
When on the death of some great Chief, the youths
Girding their loins anticipate the prize,

But sight of those with wonder fill'd me most,
So glorious past all others were the games
By silver-footed Thetis given for thee,
For thou wast ever favour'd of the Gods.
Thus hast thou not, Achilles! although dead,
Forgone thy glory, but thy fair report
Is universal among all mankind;
But as for me, what recompense had I,
My warfare closed? for whom, at my return,
Jove framed such dire destruction by the hands
Of fell Ægisthus and my murtheress wife.
Thus mutual they conferr'd; meantime approach'd,
Swift messenger of heaven, the Argicide,
Conducting thither all the shades of those
Slain by Ulysses. At that sight amazed
Both moved toward them. Agamemnon's shade
Knew well Amphimedon, for he had been
Erewhile his father's guest in Ithaca,
And thus the spirit of Atreus' son began.
Amphimedon! by what disastrous chance,
Coævals as ye seem, and of an air
Distinguish'd all, descend ye to the Deeps?
For not the chosen youths of a whole town
Should form a nobler band. Perish'd ye sunk
Amid vast billows and rude tempests raised
By Neptune's power? or on dry land through force
Of hostile multitudes, while cutting off
Beeves from the herd, or driving flocks away?
Or fighting for your city and your wives?
Resolve me; I was once a guest of yours.

Remember'st not what time at your abode
With godlike Menelaus I arrived,
That we might win Ulysses with his fleet
To follow us to Troy? scarce we prevail'd
At last to gain the city-waster Chief,
And after all, consumed a whole month more
The wide sea traversing from side to side.
To whom the spirit of Amphimedon.
Illustrious Agamemnon, King of men!
All this I bear in mind, and will rehearse
The manner of our most disastrous end.
Believing brave Ulysses lost, we woo'd
Meantime his wife; she our detested suit
Would neither ratify nor yet refuse,
But, planning for us a tremendous death,
This novel stratagem, at last, devised.
Beginning in her own recess, a web
Of slenderest thread, and of a length and breadth
Unusual, thus the suitors she address'd.
Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief
Ulysses is no more, enforce not yet
My nuptials; wait till I shall finish first
A funeral robe (lest all my threads decay)
Which for the antient Hero I prepare,
Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest;
Else I the censure dread of all my sex,
Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.
So spake the Queen; we, unsuspicious all,
With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day

She wove the ample web, and by the aid
Of torches ravell'd it again at night.
Three years she thus by artifice our suit
Eluded safe, but when the fourth arrived,
And the same season, after many moons
And fleeting days return'd, a damsel then
Of her attendants, conscious of the fraud,
Reveal'd it, and we found her pulling loose
The splendid web. Thus through constraint, at length
She finish'd it, and in her own despight.
But when the Queen produced, at length, her work
Finish'd, new-blanch'd, bright as the sun or moon,
Then came Ulysses, by some adverse God
Conducted to the cottage on the verge
Of his own fields, in which his swine-herd dwells;
There also the illustrious Hero's son
Arrived soon after, in his sable bark
From sandy Pylus borne; they plotting both
A dreadful death for all the suitors, sought
Our glorious city, but Ulysses last,
And first Telemachus. The father came
Conducted by his swine-herd, and attired
In tatters foul; a mendicant he seem'd,
Time-worn, and halted on a staff. So clad,
And entering on the sudden, he escaped
All knowledge even of our eldest there,
And we reviled and smote him; he, although
Beneath his own roof smitten and reproach'd,
With patience suffer'd it awhile, but roused
By inspiration of Jove ægis-arm'd

At length, in concert with his son convey'd
To his own chamber his resplendent arms,
There lodged them safe, and barr'd the massy doors.
Then, in his subtlety he bade the Queen
A contest institute with bow and rings
Between the hapless suitors, whence ensued
Slaughter to all. No suitor there had power
To overcome the stubborn bow that mock'd
All our attempts; and when the weapon huge
At length was offer'd to Ulysses' hands,
With clamour'd menaces we bade the swain
Withhold it from him, plead he as he might;
Telemachus alone, with loud command,
Bade give it him, and the illustrious Chief
Receiving in his hand the bow, with ease
Bent it, and sped a shaft through all the rings.
Then springing to the portal steps, he pour'd
The arrows forth, peer'd terrible around,
Pierced King Antinoüs, and aiming sure
His deadly darts, pierced others after him,
Till in one common carnage heap'd we lay.
Some God, as plain appear'd, vouchsafed them aid,
Such ardour urged them, and with such dispatch
They slew us on all sides; hideous were heard
The groans of dying men fell'd to the earth
With head-strokes rude, and the floor swam with blood.
Such, royal Agamemnon! was the fate
By which we perish'd, all whose bodies lie
Unburied still, and in Ulysses' house,
For tidings none hath yet our friends alarm'd

And kindred, who might cleanse from sable gore
Our clotted wounds, and mourn us on the bier,
Which are the rightful privilege of the dead.
Him answer'd, then, the shade of Atreus' son.
Oh happy offspring of Laertes! shrewd
Ulysses! matchless valour thou hast shewn
Recovering thus thy wife; nor less appears
The virtue of Icarius' daughter wise,
The chaste Penelope, so faithful found
To her Ulysses, husband of her youth.
His glory, by superior merit earn'd,
Shall never die, and the immortal Gods
Shall make Penelope a theme of song
Delightful in the ears of all mankind.
Not such was Clytemnestra, daughter vile
Of Tyndarus; she shed her husband's blood,
And shall be chronicled in song a wife
Of hateful memory, by whose offence
Even the virtuous of her sex are shamed.
Thus they, beneath the vaulted roof obscure
Of Pluto's house, conferring mutual stood.
Meantime, descending from the city-gates,
Ulysses, by his son and by his swains
Follow'd, arrived at the delightful farm
Which old Laertes had with strenuous toil
Himself long since acquired. There stood his house
Encompass'd by a bower in which the hinds
Who served and pleased him, ate, and sat, and slept.
An ancient woman, a Sicilian, dwelt
There also, who in that sequester'd spot

Attended diligent her aged Lord.
Then thus Ulysses to his followers spake.
Haste now, and entering, slay ye of the swine
The best for our regale; myself the while,
Will prove my father, if his eye hath still
Discernment of me, or if absence long
Have worn the knowledge of me from his mind.
He said, and gave into his servants' care
His arms; they swift proceeded to the house,
And to the fruitful grove himself as swift
To prove his father. Down he went at once
Into the spacious garden-plot, but found
Nor Dolius there, nor any of his sons
Or servants; they were occupied elsewhere,
And with the ancient hind himself, employ'd
Collecting thorns with which to fence the grove.
In that umbrageous spot he found alone
Laertes, with his hoe clearing a plant;
Sordid his tunic was, with many a patch
Mended unseemly; leathern were his greaves,
Thong-tied and also patch'd, a frail defence
Against sharp thorns, while gloves secured his hands
From briar-points, and on his head he bore
A goat-skin casque, nourishing hopeless woe.
No sooner then the Hero toil-inured
Saw him age-worn and wretched, than he paused
Beneath a lofty pear-tree's shade to weep.
There standing much he mused, whether, at once,
Kissing and clasping in his arms his sire,
To tell him all, by what means he had reach'd

His native country, or to prove him first.
At length he chose as his best course, with words
Of seeming strangeness to accost his ear,
And with that purpose, moved direct toward him.
He stooping low, loosen'd the earth around
A garden-plant, when his illustrious son
Now standing close beside him, thus began.
Old sir! thou art no novice in these toils
Of culture, but thy garden thrives; I mark
In all thy ground no plant, fig, olive, vine,
Pear-tree or flower-bed suffering through neglect.
But let it not offend thee if I say
That thou neglect'st thyself, at the same time
Oppress'd with age, sun-parch'd, and ill-attired.
Not for thy inactivity, methinks,
Thy master slights thee thus, nor speaks thy form
Or thy surpassing stature servile aught
In thee, but thou resemblest more a King.
Yes—thou resemblest one who, bathed and fed,
Should softly sleep; such is the claim of age.
But tell me true—for whom labourest thou,
And whose this garden? answer me beside,
For I would learn; have I indeed arrived
In Ithaca, as one whom here I met
Even now assured me, but who seem'd a man
Not overwise, refusing both to hear
My questions, and to answer when I ask'd
Concerning one in other days my guest
And friend, if he have still his being here,
Or have deceased and journey'd to the shades?

For I will tell thee; therefore mark. Long since
A stranger reach'd my house in my own land,
Whom I with hospitality received,
Nor ever sojourn'd foreigner with me
Whom I loved more. He was by birth, he said,
Ithacan, and Laertes claim'd his sire,
Son of Arcesias. Introducing him
Beneath my roof, I entertain'd him well,
And proved by gifts his welcome at my board.
I gave him seven talents of wrought gold,
A goblet, argent all, with flowers emboss'd,
Twelve single cloaks, twelve carpets, mantles twelve
Of brightest lustre, with as many vests,
And added four fair damsels, whom he chose
Himself, well born and well accomplish'd all.
Then thus his ancient sire weeping replied.
Stranger! thou hast in truth attain'd the isle
Of thy enquiry, but it is possess'd
By a rude race, and lawless. Vain, alas!
Were all thy numerous gifts; yet hadst thou found
Him living here in Ithaca, with gifts
Reciprocated he had sent thee hence,
Requiting honourably in his turn
Thy hospitality. But give me quick
Answer, and true. How many have been the years
Since thy reception of that hapless guest
My son? for mine, my own dear son was he.
But him, far distant both from friends and home,
Either the fishes of the unknown Deep
Have eaten, or wild beasts and fowls of prey,
Nor I, or she who bare him, was ordain'd

To bathe his shrouded body with our tears,
Nor his chaste wife, well-dower'd Penelope
To close her husband's eyes, and to deplore
His doom, which is the privilege of the dead.
But tell me also thou, for I would learn,
Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from whom?
The bark in which thou and thy godlike friends
Arrived, where is she anchor'd on our coast?
Or camest thou only passenger on board
Another's bark, who landed thee and went?
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
I will with all simplicity relate
What thou hast ask'd. Of Alybas am I,
Where in much state I dwell, son of the rich
Apheidas, royal Polypemon's son,
And I am named Eperitus; by storms
Driven from Sicily I have arrived,
And yonder, on the margin of the field
That skirts your city, I have moor'd my bark.
Five years have pass'd since thy Ulysses left,
Unhappy Chief! my country; yet the birds
At his departure hover'd on the right,
And in that sign rejoicing, I dismiss'd
Him thence rejoicing also, for we hoped
To mix in social intercourse again,
And to exchange once more pledges of love.
He spake; then sorrow as a sable cloud
Involved Laertes; gathering with both hands
The dust, he pour'd it on his reverend head
With many a piteous groan. Ulysses' heart

Commotion felt, and his stretch'd nostrils throbb'd
With agony close-pent, while fix'd he eyed
His father; with a sudden force he sprang
Toward him, clasp'd, and kiss'd him, and exclaim'd.
My father! I am he. Thou seest thy son
Absent these twenty years at last return'd.
But bid thy sorrows cease; suspend henceforth
All lamentation; for I tell thee true,
(And the occasion bids me briefly tell thee)
I have slain all the suitors at my home,
And all their taunts and injuries avenged.
Then answer thus Laertes quick return'd.
If thou hast come again, and art indeed
My son Ulysses, give me then the proof
Indubitable, that I may believe.
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
View, first, the scar which with his ivory tusk
A wild boar gave me, when at thy command
And at my mother's, to Autolycus
Her father, on Parnassus, I repair'd
Seeking the gifts which, while a guest of yours,
He promised should be mine. Accept beside
This proof. I will enumerate all the trees
Which, walking with thee in this cultured spot
(Boy then) I begg'd, and thou confirm'dst my own.
We paced between them, and thou madest me learn
The name of each. Thou gavest me thirteen pears[3],
Ten apples[3], thirty figs[3], and fifty ranks

[3] The fruit is here used for the tree that bore it, as it is in the Greek; the Latins used the same mode of expression, neither is it uncommon in our own language.

Did promise me of vines, their alleys all
Corn-cropp'd between. There oft as sent from Jove
The influences of the year descend,
Grapes of all hues and flavours clustering hang.
He said; Laertes conscious of the proofs
Indubitable by Ulysses given,
With faultering knees and faultering heart both arms
Around him threw. The Hero toil-inured
Drew to his bosom close his fainting sire,
Who, breath recovering, and his scatter'd powers
Of intellect, at length thus spake aloud.
Ye Gods! oh then your residence is still
On the Olympian heights, if punishment
At last hath seized on those flagitious men.
But terrour shakes me, lest, incensed, ere long
All Ithaca flock hither, and dispatch
Swift messengers with these dread tidings charged
To every Cephallenian state around.
Him answer'd then Ulysses ever wise.
Courage! fear nought, but let us to the house
Beside the garden, whither I have sent
Telemachus, the herdsman, and the good
Eumæus to prepare us quick repast.
So they conferr'd, and to Laertes' house
Pass'd on together; there arrived, they found
Those three preparing now their plenteous feast,
And mingling sable wine; then, by the hands
Of his Sicilian matron, the old King
Was bathed, anointed, and attired afresh,
And Pallas, drawing nigh, dilated more
His limbs, and gave his whole majestic form

Encrease of amplitude. He left the bath.
His son, amazed as he had seen a God
Alighted newly from the skies, exclaim'd.
My father! doubtless some immortal Power
Hath clothed thy form with dignity divine.
Then thus replied his venerable sire.
Jove! Pallas! Phœbus! oh that I possess'd
Such vigour now, as when in arms I took
Nericus, continental city fair,
With my brave Cephallenians! oh that such
And arm'd as then, I yesterday had stood
Beside thee in thy palace, combating
Those suitors proud, then had I strew'd the floor
With numerous slain, to thy exceeding joy.
Such was their conference; and now, the task
Of preparation ended, and the feast
Set forth, on couches and on thrones they sat,
And ranged in order due, took each his share.
Then ancient Dolius, and with him, his sons
Arrived toil-worn, by the Sicilian dame
Summon'd, their cateress, and their father's kind
Attendant ever in his eve of life.
They, seeing and recalling soon to mind
Ulysses, in the middle mansion stood
Wondering, when thus Ulysses with a voice
Of some reproof, but gentle, them bespake.
Old servant, sit and eat, banishing fear
And mute amazement; for, although provoked
By appetite, we have long time abstain'd,
Expecting every moment thy return.
He said; then Dolius with expanded arms

Sprang right toward Ulysses, seized his hand,
Kiss'd it, and in wing'd accents thus replied.
Oh master ever dear! since thee the Gods
Themselves, in answer to our warm desires,
Have, unexpectedly, at length restored,
Hail, and be happy, and heaven make thee such!
But say, and truly; knows the prudent Queen
Already thy return, or shall we send
Ourselves an herald with the joyful news?
To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
My ancient friend, thou may'st release thy mind
From that solicitude; she knows it well.
So he; then Dolius to his glossy seat
Return'd, and all his sons gathering around
Ulysses, welcomed him and grasp'd his hand,
Then sat beside their father; thus beneath
Laertes' roof they, joyful, took repast.
But Fame with rapid haste the city roam'd
In every part, promulging in all ears
The suitors' horrid fate. No sooner heard
The multitude that tale, than one and all
Groaning they met and murmuring before
Ulysses' gates. Bringing the bodies forth,
They buried each his friend, but gave the dead
Of other cities to be ferried home
By fishermen on board their rapid barks.
All hasted then to council; sorrow wrung
Their hearts, and, the assembly now convened,
Arising first Eupithes spake, for grief
Sat heavy on his soul, grief for the loss

Of his Antinoüs by Ulysses slain
Foremost of all, whom mourning, thus he said.
My friends! no trivial fruits the Greecians reap
Of this man's doings. *Those* he took with him
On board his barks, a numerous train and bold,
Then lost his barks, lost all his numerous train,
And *these*, our noblest, slew at his return.
Come therefore—ere he yet escape by flight
To Pylus or to noble Elis, realm
Of the Epeans, follow him; else shame
Attends us and indelible reproach.
If we avenge not on these men the blood
Of our own sons and brothers, farewell then
All that makes life desirable; my wish
Henceforth shall be to mingle with the shades.
Oh then pursue and seize them ere they fly.
Thus he with tears, and pity moved in all.
Then, Medon and the sacred bard whom sleep
Had lately left, arriving from the house
Of Laertiades, approach'd; amid
The throng they stood; all wonder'd seeing them,
And Medon, prudent senior, thus began.
Hear me, my countrymen! Ulysses plann'd
With no disapprobation of the Gods
The deed that ye deplore. I saw, myself,
A Power immortal at the Hero's side,
In semblance just of Mentor; now the God,
In front apparent, led him on, and now,
From side to side of all the palace, urged
To flight the suitors; heaps on heaps they fell.

He said; then terrour wan seized every cheek
And Halitherses, Hero old, the son
Of Mastor, who alone among them all
Knew past and future, prudent, thus began.
Now, O ye men of Ithaca! my words
Attentive hear! by your own fault, my friends,
This deed hath been perform'd; for when myself
And noble Mentor counsell'd you to check
The sin and folly of your sons, ye would not.
Great was their wickedness, and flagrant wrong
They wrought, the wealth devouring, and the wife
Dishonouring of an illustrious Chief
Whom they deem'd destined never to return.
But hear my counsel. Go not, lest ye draw
Disaster down and woe on your own heads.
He ended; then with boisterous roar (although
Part kept their seats) upsprang the multitude,
For Halitherses pleased them not, they chose
Eupithes' counsel rather; all at once
To arms they flew, and clad in dazzling brass,
Before the city form'd their dense array.
Leader infatuate, at their head appear'd
Eupithes, hoping to avenge his son
Antinoüs, but was himself ordain'd
To meet his doom, and to return no more.
Then thus Minerva to Saturnian Jove.
Oh father! son of Saturn! Jove supreme!
Declare the purpose hidden in thy breast.
Wilt thou that this hostility proceed,
Or wilt thou grant them amity again?

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
Why asks my daughter? didst thou not design
Thyself, that brave Ulysses coming home
Should slay those profligates? act as thou wilt,
But thus I counsel. Since the noble Chief
Hath slain the suitors, now let peace ensue
Oath-bound, and reign Ulysses evermore!
The slaughter of their brethren and their sons
To strike from their remembrance, shall be ours.
Let mutual amity, as at the first,
Unite them, and let wealth and peace abound.
So saying, he animated to her task
Minerva prompt before, and from the heights
Olympian down to Ithaca she flew.
Meantime Ulysses (for their hunger now
And thirst were sated) thus address'd his hinds.
Look ye abroad, lest haply they approach.
He said, and at his word, forth went a son
Of Dolius; at the gate he stood, and thence
Beholding all that multitude at hand,
In accents wing'd thus to Ulysses spake.
They come—they are already arrived—arm all!
Then, all arising, put their armour on,
Ulysses with his three, and the six sons
Of Dolius; Dolius also with the rest
Arm'd and Laertes, although silver-hair'd,
Warriors perforce. When all were clad alike
In radiant armour, throwing wide the gates
They sallied, and Ulysses led the way.
Then Jove's own daughter Pallas, in the form

And with the voice of Mentor, came in view,
Whom seeing Laertiades rejoiced,
And thus Telemachus, his son, bespake.
Now, oh my son! thou shalt observe, untold
By me, where fight the bravest. Oh shame not
Thine ancestry, who have in all the earth
Proof given of valour in all ages past.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
My father! if thou wish that spectacle,
Thou shalt behold thy son as thou hast said,
In nought dishonouring his noble race.
Then was Laertes joyful, and exclaim'd,
What sun hath risen to day[4]? oh blessed Gods!
My son and grandson emulous dispute
The prize of glory, and my soul exults.
He ended, and Minerva, drawing nigh
To the old King, thus counsell'd him. Oh friend
Whom most I love, son of Arcesias; prayer
Preferring to the virgin azure-eyed,
And to her father Jove, delay not, shake
Thy lance in air, and give it instant flight.
So saying, the Goddess nerved his arm anew.
He sought in prayer the daughter dread of Jove,
And brandishing it, hurl'd his lance; it struck
Eupithes, pierced his helmet brazen-cheek'd
That stay'd it not, but forth it sprang beyond,
And with loud clangor of his arms he fell.
Then flew Ulysses and his noble son

[4] Τίς νύ μοι ἡμέρη ἤδε;—So Cicero, who seems to translate it—Proh dii immortales! Quis hic illuxit dies! See Clarke in loco.

With faulchion and with spear of double edge
To the assault, and of them all had left
None living, none had to his home return'd,
But that Jove's virgin daughter with a voice
Of loud authority thus quell'd them all.
  Peace, O ye men of Ithaca! while yet
The field remains undeluged with your blood.
  So she, and fear at once paled every cheek.
All trembled at the voice divine; their arms
Escaping from the grasp fell to the earth,
And covetous of longer life, each fled
Back to the city. Then Ulysses sent
His voice abroad, and with an eagle's force
Sprang on the people; but Saturnian Jove
Cast down, incontinent, his smouldering bolt
At Pallas feet, and thus the Goddess spake.
  Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
Forbear; abstain from slaughter; lest thyself
Incur the anger of high-thundering Jove.
  So Pallas, whom Ulysses glad obey'd.
Then faithful covenants of peace between
Both sides ensued, ratified in the sight
Of Pallas, progeny of Jove, who seem'd
In voice and form, the Mentor known to all.

THE

BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE.

TRANSLATED INTO

ENGLISH BLANK VERSE

BY THE SAME HAND.

THE

BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE.

Descend all Helicon into my breast!
Oh every virgin of the tuneful choir
Breathe on my song which I have newly traced
In tables open'd on my knees, a song
Of bloodiest note—terrible deeds of Mars
Well worthy of the ears of all mankind,
Whom I desire to teach, how, erst, the Mice
Assail'd the Frogs, mimicking in exploit
The prowess of the giant race earth-born.
The rumour once was frequent in the mouths
Of mortal men, and thus the strife began.
A thirsty Mouse (thirsty with fear and flight
From a cat's claws) sought out the nearest lake,
Where dipping in the flood his downy chin,
He drank delighted. Him the frog far-famed
Limnocharis[1] espied, and thus he spake.
Who art thou, stranger? Whence hast thou arrived
On this our border, and who gave thee birth?

[1] The beauty of the lake.

Beware thou trespass not against the truth;
Lie not! for should I find thy merit such
As claims my love, I will conduct thee hence
To my abode, where gifts thou shalt receive
Liberal and large, with hospitable fare.
I am the King Physignathus[2], revered
By the inhabitants of all this pool,
Chief of the frogs for ever. Me, long since,
Peleus[3] begat, embracing on the banks
Of the Eridanus my mother fair,
Hydromedusa[4]. Nor thee less than King
Or leader bold in fight thy form proclaims,
Stout as it is, and beautiful.—Dispatch—
Speak therefore, and declare thy pedigree.
He ceased, to whom Psycharpax[5] thus replied.
Illustrious sir! wherefore hast thou enquired
My derivation, known to all, alike
To Gods and men, and to the fowls of heaven?
I am Psycharpax, and the dauntless Chief
Troxartes[6] is my sire, whose beauteous spouse
Daughter of Pternotroctes[7] brought me forth,
Lichomyle[8] by name. A cave of earth
My cradle was, and, in my youngling state,
My mother nourish'd me with almonds, figs,
And delicacies of a thousand names.
But diverse as our natures are, in nought

[2] The pouter.
[3] Of or belonging to mud.
[4] Governess of the waters.
[5] The crumb-catcher.
[6] The bread eater.
[7] The bacon-eater.
[8] The licker of mill-stones.

Similar, how alas! can we be friends?
The floods are thine abode, while I partake
With man his sustenance. The basket stored
With wheaten loaves thrice kneaded, 'scapes not me,
Nor wafer broad, enrich'd with balmy sweets,
Nor ham in slices spread, nor liver wrapt
In tunic silver-white, nor curds express'd
From sweetest milk, nor, sweeter still, the full
Honeycomb, coveted by Kings themselves,
Nor aught by skilful cook invented yet
Of sauce or seasoning for delight of man.
I am brave also, and shrink not at sound
Of glorious war, but rushing to the van,
Mix with the foremost combatants. No fear
Of man himself shakes me, vast as he is,
But to his bed I steal, and make me sport
Nibbling his fingers' end, or with sharp tooth
Fretting his heel so neatly that he sleeps
Profound the while, unconscious of the bite.
Two things, of all that are, appal me most,
The owl and cat. These cause me many a pang.
As does the hollow gin insidious, fair
In promises, but in performance foul,
Engine of death! yet most of all I dread
Cats, nimble mousers, who can dart a paw
After me, enter at what chink I may.
But to return—your diet, parsley, kail,
Beet, radish, gourd, (for, as I understand,
Ye eat no other) are not to my taste.
Him then with smiles answer'd Physignathus.

Stranger! thou vauntest much thy dainty fare,
But, both on shore and in the lake we boast
Our dainties also, and such sights as much
Would move thy wonder; for by gift from Jove
We leap as well as swim, can range the land
For food, or diving, seek it in the Deep.
Would'st thou the proof? 'tis easy—mount my back—
There cling as for thy life, and thou shalt share
With rapture the delights of my abode.
He said, and gave his back. Upsprang the mouse
Lightly, and with his arms enfolded fast
The Frog's soft neck. Pleased was he, at the first,
With view of many a creek and bay, nor less
With his smooth swimming on whose back he rode.
But when, at length, the clear wave dash'd his sides,
Then, fill'd with penitential sorrows vain
He wept, pluck'd off his hair, and gathering close
His hinder feet, survey'd with trembling heart
The novel sight, and wish'd for land again.
Groans follow'd next, extorted groans, through stress
Of shivering fear, and, with extended tail
Drawn like a long oar after him, he pray'd
For land again; but, while he pray'd, again
The clear wave dash'd him. Much he shriek'd, and much
He clamour'd, and, at length thus sorrowing, said.
Oh desperate navigation strange! not thus
Europa floated to the shores of Crete
On the broad back of her enamour'd bull.
And now, dread spectacle to both, behold

An Hydra! on the lake with crest erect
He rode, and right toward them. At that sight
Down went Physignathus, heedless alas!
Through fear, how great a Prince he should destroy.
Himself, at bottom of the pool escaped
The dreadful death; but, at his first descent
Dislodged, Psycharpax fell into the flood.
There, stretch'd supine, he clench'd his hands, he shriek'd,
Plunged oft, and lashing out his heels afar,
Oft rose again, but no deliverance found.
At length, oppress'd by his drench'd coat, and soon
To sink for ever, thus he prophecied.
Thou hast released thy shoulders at my cost,
Physignathus! unfeeling as the rock,
But not unnoticed by the Gods above.
Ah worst of traitors! on dry land, I ween,
Thou hadst not foil'd me, whether in the race
Or wrestling-match, or at whatever game.
Thou hast by fraud prevail'd, casting me off
Into the waters; but an eye divine
Sees all. Nor hope thou to escape the host
Of Mice, who shall, ere long, avenge the deed.
So saying, he sank and died; whom, while he sat
Reposing on the lake's soft verge, the Mouse
Lichopinax[9] observed; aloud he wail'd,
And flew with those sad tidings to his friends.
Grief, at the sound, immeasurable seized

[9] The dish-licker.

On all, and by command, at dawn of day
The heralds call'd a council at the house
Of brave Troxartes, father of the Prince
Now lost, a carcase now, nor nigh to land
Weltering, but distant in the middle pool.
The multitude in haste convened, uprose
Troxartes for his son incensed, and said,
Ah friends! although my damage from the Frogs
Sustain'd be greatest, yet is yours not small.
Three children I have lost, wretch that I am,
All sons. A merciless and hungry cat
Finding mine eldest son abroad, surprised
And slew him. Lured into a wooden snare,
(New machination of unfeeling man
For slaughter of our race, and named a trap)
My second died. And now, as ye have heard,
My third, his mother's and my darling, him
Physignathus hath drown'd in yon abyss.
Haste therefore, and in gallant armour bright
Attired, march forth, ye Mice, now seek the foe.
So saying, he roused them to the fight, and Mars
Attendant arm'd them. Splitting first the pods
Of beans which they had sever'd from the stalk
With hasty tooth by night, they made them greaves.
Their corslets were of platted straw, well lined
With spoils of an excoriated cat.
The lamp contributed its central tin,
A shield for each. The glittering needle long
Arm'd every gripe with a terrific spear,
And auburn shells of nuts their brows enclosed.

Thus arm'd the Mice advanced, of whose approach
The Frogs apprized, emerging from the lake,
All throng'd to council, and considering sat
The sudden tumult and its cause. Then came,
Sceptre in hand, an herald. Son was he
Of the renown'd Tyroglyphus[10], and call'd
Embasichytrus[11]. Charged he came to announce
The horrors of approaching war, and said—
Ye Frogs! the host of Mice send you by me
Menaces and defiance. Arm, they say,
For furious fight; for they have seen the Prince
Psycharpax weltering on the waves, and drown'd
By King Physignathus. Ye then, the Chiefs
And leaders of the host of Frogs, put on
Your armour, and draw forth your bands to battle!
He said, and went. Then were the noble Frogs
Troubled at that bold message, and while all
Murmur'd against Physignathus, the King
Himself arising, thus denied the charge.
My friends! I neither drown'd the Mouse, nor saw
His drowning. Doubtless, while he strove in sport
To imitate the swimming of the Frogs,
He sank and died. Thus, blame is none in me,
And these injurious slanders do me wrong.
Consult we, therefore, how we may destroy
The subtle Mice, which thus we will perform.
Arm'd and adorn'd for battle, we will wait
Their coming where our coast is most abrupt.

[10] A cheese-rasper. [11] The explorer of pots and pipkins.

Then, soon as they shall rush to the assault,
Seizing them by the helmet, as they come,
We will precipitate them, arms and all,
Into the lake; unskilful as they are
To swim, their suffocation there is sure,
And we will build a trophy to record
The great Mouse-massacre for evermore.
So saying, he gave commandment, and all arm'd.
With leaves of mallows each his legs incased,
Guarded his bosom with a corslet cut
From the green beet, with foliage tough of kail
Fashion'd his ample buckler, with a rush
Keen-tipt, of length tremendous, fill'd his gripe,
And on his brows set fast a cockle-shell.
Then on the summit of the loftiest bank
Drawn into phalanx firm they stood, all shook
Their quivering spears, and wrath swell'd every breast.
Jove saw them, and assembling all the Gods
To council in the skies, Behold, he said,
Yon numerous hosts, magnanimous, robust,
And rough with spears, how like the giant race
They move, or like the Centaurs! smiling, next,
He ask'd, of all the Gods, who favour'd most
The Mice, and who the Frogs? but at the last,
Turning toward Minerva, thus he spake.
The Mice, my daughter, need thee; goest thou not
To aid thy friends the Mice, inmates of thine,
Who to thy temple drawn by savoury steams
Sacrifical, and day by day refresh'd
With dainties there, dance on thy sacred floor?

So spake the God, and Pallas thus replied.
My father! suffer as they may, the Mice
Shall have no aid from me, whom much they wrong,
Marring my wreaths, and plundering of their oil
My lamps.—But this, of all their impious deeds,
Offends me most, that they have eaten holes
In my best mantle, which with curious art
Divine, I wove, light, easy, delicate;
And now, the artificer whom I employ'd
To mend it, clamouring demands a price
Exorbitant, which moves me much to wrath,
For I obtain'd on trust those costly threads,
And have not wherewithal to pay the arrear.
Nor love I more the Frogs, or purpose more
To succour even them, since they not less,
Dolts as they are, and destitute of thought,
Have incommoded me. For when, of late,
Returning from a fight weary and faint
I needed rest, and would have slept, no sleep
Found I, those ceaseless croakers of the lake
Noisy, perverse, forbidding me a wink.
Sleepless, and with an aching head I lay
Therefore until the crowing of the cock.
By my advice, then, O ye Gods, move not
Nor interfere, favouring either side,
Lest ye be wounded; for both hosts alike
Are valiant, nor would scruple to assail
Even ourselves. Suffice it, therefore, hence
To view the battle, safe, and at our ease.
She ceased, and all complied. Meantime, t

Drew nearer, and in front of each was seen
An herald, gonfalon in hand; huge gnats
Through clarions of unwieldy length sang forth
The dreadful note of onset fierce, and Jove
Doubled the signal, thundering from above.
First, with his spear Hypsiboas[12] assail'd
Lichenor[13]. Deep into his body rush'd
The point, and pierced his liver. Prone he fell,
And all his glossy down with dust defiled.
Then, Troglodytes[14] hurl'd his massy spear
At Pelion[15], which he planted in his chest.
Down dropp'd the Frog, night whelm'd him, and he died.
Seutlæus[16], through his heart piercing him, slew
Embasichytrus. Polyphonus[17] fell
Pierced through his belly by the spear of bold
Artophagus[18], and prone in dust expired.
Incensed at sight of Polyphonus slain,
Limnocharis at Troglodytes cast
A mill-stone weight of rock; full on the neck
He batter'd him, and darkness veil'd his eyes.
At him Lichenor hurl'd a glittering lance,
Nor err'd, but pierced his liver. Trembling fled
Crambophagus[19] at that dread sight, and plunged
Over the precipice into the lake,
Yet even there found refuge none, for brave

[12] The loud-croaker.
[13] One addicted to licking.
[14] A creeper into holes and crannies.
[15] Offspring of the mud.
[16] A feeder on beet.
[17] The noisy.
[18] The bread-eater.
[19] The cabbage-eater.

Lichenor following, smote him even there.
So fell Crambophagus, and from that fall
Never arose, but reddening with his blood
The wave, and wallowing in the strings and slime
Of his own vitals, near the bank expired.
Limnisius[20] on the grassy shore struck down
Tyroglyphus[21]; but at the view alone
Of terrible Pternoglyphus[22] appall'd,
Fled Calaminthius[23], cast away his shield
Afar, and headlong plunged into the lake.
Hydrocharis[24] with a vast stone assail'd
The King Pternophagus[25]; the rugged mass
Descending on his poll, crush'd it; the brain
Oozed through his nostrils drop by drop, and all
The bank around was spatter'd with his blood.
Lichopinax with his long spear transpierced
Borborocoites[26]; darkness veil'd his eyes.
Prassophagus[27] with vengeful notice mark'd
Cnissodioctes[28]; seizing with one hand
His foot, and with the other hand his neck,
He plunged, and held him plunged, till drown'd he died.
Psycharpax standing boldly in defence
Of his slain fellow-warriors, urged his spear
Right through Pelusius[29]; at his feet he fell,
And, dying, mingled with the Frogs below.

[20] Of the lake.
[21] The cheese-scraper.
[22] The ham-scraper.
[23] So call'd from the herb calamint.
[24] One whose delight is in water.
[25] The bacon-eater.
[26] The sleeper in the mud.
[27] The garlic-eater.
[28] The savoury-steam-hunter.
[29] The muddy.

Resentful of his death, the mighty Frog
Pelobates[30] an handful cast of mud
Full at Psycharpax; all his ample front
He smear'd, and left him scarce a glimpse of day.
Psycharpax, at the foul dishonour, still
Exasperate more, upheaving from the ground
A rock that had incumber'd long the bank,
Hurl'd it against Pelobates; below
The knees he smote him, shiver'd his right leg
In pieces, and outstretch'd him in the dust.
But him Craugasides[31], who stood to guard
The fallen Chief, assail'd; with his long lance
He prick'd Psycharpax at the waist! the whole
Keen-pointed rush transpierced his belly, and all
His bowels following the retracted point,
O'erspread the ensanguined herbage at his side.
Soon as Sitophagus[32], a crippled mouse,
That sight beheld, limping, as best he could,
He left the field, and, to avoid a fate
Not less tremendous, dropp'd into a ditch.
Troxartes grazed the instep of the bold
Physignathus, who at the sudden pang
Startled, at once leap'd down into the lake.
Prasseus[33], at the sight of such a Chief
Floating in mortal agonies enraged,
Sprang through his foremost warriors, and dismiss'd
His pointed rush, but reach'd not through his shield
Troxartes, baffled by the stubborn disk.
There was a Mouse, young, beautiful and brave

[30] The mud-walker. [31] The hoarse-croaker.
[32] The cake-eater. [33] One who deals much in garlic.

Past all on earth, son of the valiant Chief
Artepibulus[34]. Like another Mars
He fought, and Meridarpax[35] was his name,
A Mouse, among all Mice without a peer.
Glorying in his might on the lake's verge
He stood with other Mouse none at his side,
And swore to extirpate the whole croaking race.
Nor doubted any but he should perform
His dreadful oath, such was his force in arms,
Had not Saturnian Jove with sudden note
Perceived his purpose; with compassion touch'd
Of the devoted Frogs the Sovereign shook
His brows, and thus the Deities address'd.
I see a prodigy, ye Powers divine!
And, with no small amazement smitten, hear
Prince Meridarpax menacing the Frogs
With general extirpation. Haste—be quick—
Dispatch we Pallas terrible in fight,
Not her alone, but also Mars, to quell
With force combined the sanguinary Chief.
So spake the Thunderer, and thus Mars replied.
Neither the force of Pallas, nor the force
Of Mars, O Jove! will save the destined Frogs
From swift destruction. Let us all descend
To aid them, or, lest all suffice not, grasp
And send abroad thy biggest bolt, thy bolt
Tempestuous, terrour of the Titian race,
By which those daring enemies thou slew'st,
And didst coerce with adamantine chains
Enceladus, and all that monstrous brood.

[34] One who lies in wait for bread. [35] The scrap-catcher.

He said, and Jove dismiss'd the smouldering bolt.
At his first thunder, to its base he shook
The vast Olympian. Then—whirling about
His forky fires, he launch'd them to the ground,
And, as they left the Sovereign's hand, the heart
Of every Mouse quaked, and of every Frog.
Yet ceased not, even at that shock, the Mice
From battle, but with double ardour flew
To the destruction of the Frogs, whom Jove
From the Olympian heights snow-crown'd again
Viewing, compassionated their distress,
And sent them aids. Sudden they came. Broad-back'd
They were, and smooth like anvils, sickle-claw'd,
Sideling in gait, their mouths with pincers arm'd,
Shell-clad, crook-knee'd, protruding far before
Long hands, and horns, with eye-balls in the breast,
Legs in quaternion ranged on either side,
And Crabs their name. They, seizing by his leg,
His arm, his tail a Mouse, cropp'd it, and snapp'd
His polish'd spear. Appall'd at such a foe
The miserable Mice stood not, but fled
Heartless, discomfited. And now, the sun
Descending, closed this warfare of a day.

END OF VOL. XIV.

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